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REMARKS

ON THE

Rev^d. Dr. *POWELL*'s SERMON

IN DEFENCE OF

SUBSCRIPTIONS,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE

ON THE

COMMENCEMENT SUNDAY, 1757.

WHEREIN

The LATITUDE ſaid to be allowed to SUBSCRIBERS to the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of *England*, is particularly conſidered.

WITH A

DEDICATION to the younger Students in both our Univerſities, who are deſigned for the Miniſtry of the Church.

By Jn^o Blackbourne Jr^r of Richmond in Yorkſh^e.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE excellent *Letter to the Rev. Dr. POWELL*, did not fall into the hands of the Author of these *Remarks*, till his papers were gone to the press. This was so far his misfortune, as so much of (perhaps all) his pains might otherwise have been spared. Great, however, is his pleasure in finding so many of his sentiments on this subject, in perfect agreement with those of so able and judicious a writer.

TO THE

YOUNGER STUDENTS in both our UNIVERSITIES,

Who are educated with a View to their miniſtring in the Church of ENGLAND.

GENTLEMEN,

THESE *Remarks* were not undertaken without a particular eye to *your* edification, and are now dedicated to your ſervice. The Queſtion propoſed to be illuſtrated by them is no abſtruſe point of caſuiſtry, but a plain queſtion of fact, which being fairly ſtated, may be underſtood by every one of you, who has laid a competent foundation for his theological ſtudies in practical *Ethics*, and can judge of the force of that evidence which the common ſenſe of mankind accepts as deciſive, in the moſt obvious and familiar occurrences of human life.

Among other valuable diſcoveries for which we are indebted to the liberty of enquiring into the merit of many popular doctrines of religion, the hardſhip of ſubſcribing to human ſyſtems and articles of faith has been made ſo evident, that the tempers

and ſentiments of ſome leading Prelates of our Church, ſeeming to fall in with the general ſenſe of all wiſe and good men upon the ſubject, ſome very ſanguine hopes were entertained not many years ago by many conſcientious clergymen, that the hour was certainly come, when they ſhould be relieved from the anxieties they had undergone in complying with ſuch Teſts of that kind as the law had impoſed upon them *.

That ſuch relief is really wanted, even they cannot deny who oppoſe the introduction of it. The want of it is indeed plainly confeſſed by all ſuch Defenders of ſubſcriptions as the Preacher before us. If he and his fellows were not grievouſly galled with the yoke, what occaſion to plead for a *latitude* which would defeat every rational purpoſe for which ſubſcriptions can be ſuppoſed to be required?

But whatever it was that raiſed or encouraged theſe expectations at the firſt; or whatever it was that diſappointed them in the end, they are now no more †. All relief under this as well as other difficulties,

* The great number of ſenſible and pathetic remonſtrances on the ſubject of an eccleſiaſtical reformation, addreſſed to our Spiritual Governors, and particularly to the late Archbiſhop *Herring*, is a ſufficient proof of what is here advanced. 'Tis true no ſort of public notice was taken of theſe reſcripts. But this only proves that the authors of them, and their friends, were *miſtaken* in their expectations; while the reſcripts themſelves abundantly teſtify that ſuch expectations there were, whatever occaſion was given for them. What a glorious addition would it have been to the elogies beſtowed on the abovementioned Prelate in our public prints, could it have been ſaid, either that he uſed his utmoſt endeavours to have theſe difficulties removed, or that he took care to convince the world that the removal of them could not reaſonably be deſired.

† The death-ſtroke to theſe expectations is ſaid to have been given in the year 1754: when, according to our periodical regiſters of public news, it was determined in Convocation, that THE CHURCH

ficulties, is probably at a great diſtance. And the duty and reſpect we owe to thoſe who only have it in their power to give it, oblige us to believe, that the reaſons why it is deferred, are of the moſt cogent nature.

But, GENTLEMEN, far be it from you or from me to imagine, that theſe reaſons are ſuch as are given in this Sermon for the continuance of ſubſcriptions.

It is the cuſtom of ſome political writers to treat all particular forms and modes of religion as matters of inſignificance; and to ſpeak of all debates upon ſuch ſubjects with great contempt. And indeed, when they deſcend to particulars, it muſt be owned, that the ſubject-matter of many of theſe debates is frivolous enough, when compared with the weightier matters of the law. I muſt however beg leave to except out of this conceſſion, every thing upon which the written word of God has laid any viſible ſtreſs. All ſuch things muſt be of importance, whatever the wiſdom of the world may think of them.

But the caſe we have now under conſideration, is, in no view, of the inſignificant claſs. Whether *ſome* of the forms or ceremonies of religion are or are not uſeful, edifying, expedient, &c. may be queſtions of ſmall moment, in compariſon of the public repoſe, which ought not therefore to be diſturbed by any importunate altercations upon them. But whether a ſet of men who are appointed

CHURCH OF ENGLAND HATH NO EQUAL. Our ſober anceſtors uſed to qualify ſuch commendations as this, with the words [*upon earth*] or ſomething equivalent to them. By ſuch a limitation they left a liberty to hope that the church of *England* might at ſome future time be ſtill farther advanced above all other earthly churches, by acquiring a farther degree of improvement. But ſurely it would be the vaineſt of all imaginations to think of making improvements in the conſtitution of *any* church which *abſolutely* hath *no equal*.

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by public authority to be teachers of religion, may put their own different and inconſiſtent ſenſes on a preciſe form of words, preſcribed by the ſame authority for a teſt of their opinions? or whether theſe men may diſguiſe or conceal their real meaning, and give a ſolemn aſſent by the ſubſcription of their names, to what in reality they do ~~no~~ not believe?—are queſtions which no ſound politician would determine in the affirmative. Becauſe whatever ſuch teachers may advance afterwards, by way of inforcing the duties of ſincerity and ſingleneſs of heart upon the people committed to their care, will be of little conſequence, when their own conduct comes to be known. The people will certainly think themſelves ſufficiently juſtified by this *leading* example, to take the ſame liberty both in their private and public covenants, as far as they may with impunity. And then, farewel to that good faith between man and man, ſo neceſſary for the peace and welfare of every community, in ten thouſand inſtances, which the ſtricteſt execution of the beſt human laws in the world will never be able to reach.

This, as I take it, is the natural effect of admitting ſuch a latitude in ſubſcriptions, as is contended for in this Sermon; and to ſuch a latitude, for that reaſon, I am firmly perſuaded, our governors either in the Church or the State, will not give their countenance, and much leſs their ſanction.

But, GENTLEMEN, whatever reaſon our ſuperiors may have for ſtill inſiſting on theſe Subſcriptions, it is certainly every honeſt man's buſineſs of whom ſuch a teſt is required, to conſider *for himſelf*, and that very ſeriouſly, how far he may conſcientiouſly comply with it. Examples and precedents of what has been done, let them be taken from the moſt reſpectable Perſonages or characters upon earth, will avail nothing, where a man's own ſincerity is

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at ſtake. And ſuch examples will avail you and others at *this* time, much leſs than they would have done ſome years ago. The caſe of Subſcription has been ſo plainly ſtated, and ſo fully diſcuſſed, and the merits of the diſpute brought within ſo narrow a compaſs in ſome late controverſies, that I will venture to ſay, there is not one of you, but, by the time he is qualified to take his firſt degree, may, with a very little interruption to his other ſtudies, get all the information he can be ſuppoſed to want, what his duty to God, or his obligations as a diſciple of Chriſt, permit him to do, or require him to forbear in this behalf.

The Defender of ſubſcriptions now before us, thinks it ſufficient for you to give your aſſent *on the authority of others*. Little ſhould I have expected to have met with ſuch a diſpenſation from an eminent Tutor in a proteſtant Univerſity. Pray, GENTLEMEN, what are your own ſentiments of this matter? What are thoſe of your parents, guardians, or patrons, who ſend you to *Oxford* or *Cambridge*? Was it not their deſign, that before you took orders, you ſhould be qualified by the inſtruction of able and learned teachers, to judge for yourſelves of the truth and ſolidity of *all* religious doctrines?

Some years ago, indeed, it was the practice in *both* univerſities, to take the ſubſcriptions of ſcholars to the xxxix Articles, at the time of their matriculation. But this cuſtom has been long laid aſide in the univerſity of *Cambridge*. And this has been ſpoken of ſo much to her honour, that ſuch a cuſtom cannot be imagined to be any part of the caſe Dr. *Powell* is here defending. For the Doctor, to defend a practice which *Cambridge* has diſcarded as unreaſonable and unjuſtifiable, would be to defend the rival ſiſter at the expence of his own natural parent. The reſult is, GENTLEMEN, that *you* are the Perſons who, being chiefly *engaged in other purſuits*, did

and *juſt beginning to exerciſe your reaſon*, muſt be conceived to ſubſcribe only your general belief that the articles are true, *on the authority of others*.

How different an idea of your abilities have the moſt reverend and right reverend prelates of our church? A great majority of you offer yourſelves for orders as ſoon as may be, after your firſt degree is conferred. And then, if I am not miſinformed, one of the uſual methods of probation is, to give you a ſubject taken from ſome of the articles, upon which you are required to expreſs your ſentiments in writing. On theſe occaſions, I ſuppoſe, the choice of the ſubject is not left to the candidate. A very plain argument that their Lordſhips conclude you muſt have ſtudied *all* the articles, and are come to ſufficient maturity to underſtand their contents.

But tho' I would not abſolutely conclude ſo much myſelf, yet I cannot but aſcribe ſo much more to your capacity for judging and reaſoning on this caſe of Subſcription, than Dr. *Powell* has done, as to exhort you with great earneſtneſs, to ſubſcribe or aſſent to *nothing* on the *mere authority of others*. Many of thoſe who have gone thro' this diſcipline already, find great reaſon to regret, that they had no faithful monitors to apprize them of the conſequences they now too ſenſibly ſee and feel. This is not *your* misfortune. You *are*, or you eaſily *may be* ſufficiently warned of them by a great variety of documents, which are neither too expenſive for you to purchaſe, nor too difficult for you to underſtand. And if nothing of this kind will prevail upon you to examine into the nature and conditions of ſuch an engagement, before you enter into it, remember at leaſt, that you muſt be reſponſible for this extraordinary conduct, when and where a more ſolemn account of it will be required, than you are obliged to give to any human being whatever.

To be ingenuous with you, I apprehend that ſuch of you as have the beſt capacities of underſtanding, and the deepeſt impreſſions of religion upon your minds, will upon a ſerious and impartial examination of this important caſe, find the greateſt reluctance in yourſelves to comply with theſe terms of miniſterial conformity. At the ſame time, *ſuch of you* are, of all others, the beſt qualified to promote the true intereſts of religion, or in other words, to do the moſt ſubſtantial ſervice to the community as teachers of religion.

And therefore, as all other methods of relief have failed, and all other practicable applications for it are become vain and hopeleſs; if ſuch of you as cannot ſatisfy yourſelves of the ſcriptural rectitude of the conditions required for admiſſion into the church, ſhould declare for ſome other profeſſion, while you have time to look before you, and give this want of ſatisfaction for the reaſon of ſuch declaration; I am perſuaded our ſuperiors would not be inattentive to the effect ſuch a loſs would have upon the church; and might very probably be prevailed with by that conſideration, to provide a remedy for it; that very remedy which ſo many good men have been ſo long pleading and ſighing for in vain. *

* I muſt confeſs, that, at the firſt glance, appearances are againſt us. The Proverb ſays, *If one will not, another will.* There are gentlemen who make no difficulty of undertaking each of them the duty of three, four, five or ſix important offices in the church, *in caſes of need.* And the number of candidates on all vacancies, ſeems to promiſe, that the church will be well ſupplied with theſe choice ſpirits for many generations to come. Undoubtedly the talents and capacities of theſe worthies are of the firſt magnitude. But it ſhould be conſidered, that the moſt exalted genius, joined to the nimbleſt activity of body, will not inable one and the ſame man to *operate*, or even *exiſt*, in two places at once. Even theſe great men muſt have their drudges and ſubſtitutes. And if this infection of ſcruples ſhould get among

And now, as I have allowed you to be very competent judges of the caſe I am propoſing to you, I may well expect you will begin to talk to me of the abſurdity of putting the labouring oar upon *you*, who are by no means ſufficiently ſeaſoned either by learning, experience, or habits of moral diſcipline, to make a ſtand againſt ſo many orthodox veterans, as would infallibly oppoſe the whole weight of their zeal and prejudice to the unſtable and flexible ſpirits of baſhful and timorous youth.

You will naturally ſay, "Why ſhould not men "of more maturity and deeper reflection, who are "groaning under theſe embarraſements, *firſt* en- "deavour to clear the way both for themſelves and "us, by uniting in a common petition to the legi- "ſlature; and, upon the failure of ſuch application "bravely ſet us an example of ſelf-denial, chear- "fully reſign their preferments, and thereby bear "a teſtimony to truth and liberty, becoming chriſ- "tian confeſſors."

To this I own I can but give a ſort of conjectural anſwer, made up of ſuch preſumptive concluſions as I have drawn from different accounts, given by particular clergymen of their own circumſtances, and their ſeveral judgments of this affair.

1. A large majority of the clergy, either really are, or affect to be perſuaded, that no alterations in the conſtitution of our church are at all neceſſary. At the head of theſe are ſome of the moſt opulent and dignified of the order. Vigorous oppoſition from theſe is certain and formidable, and ſufficient to intimidate the *few* in compariſon, who are affected with a different ſenſe of their ſituation. It is true indeed the reaſons for this perſuaſion, moſt of

among the herd, what might be the conſequence? What indignity to the church to ſee the pompous Dean of a Cathedral, or the venerable Head of a College, riding poſt to his country Living, to bury the corps of a wretched Cobler.

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thoſe who avow it, have the prudence either to keep to themſelves, or to retail only in private converſation. They are probably ſuch reaſons as will not bear the light. And they may know of ſome methods of *keeping things tight* without giving *any* reaſons. In a word, they are ſuch reaſons as theſe of our Defender. He alone has ventured to exhibit them in public; and he is ſo far to be commended. The public may now, we will hope, in time be brought to conſider ſeriouſly of their weight and worth, and how far *ſuch* reaſons ought to diſappoint ſuch an application, as I have ſuppoſed you to recommend.

2. The clergy who diſſent from this majority, are diſperſed and diſtributed in different and diſtant parts of the kingdom, little acquainted with each other, and in no circumſtances to unite in a common application. They are, for the moſt part, men of ſmall preferments, and ſome of them of large families: men who think their *perſonal* care of and attendance upon their reſpective pariſhes and departments, the principal end of their miniſtry, and a leading circumſtance in their future account. For the reſt, they are men of ſtudy, retirement, modeſty, and moderation, little verſed in the intrigues of the world; and who no otherwiſe know how far their conſcientious brethren are like-minded, but by ſome occaſional and nameleſs publications, which, though they fall in with their own private ſentiments, give them no ſatisfaction how much farther the authors of them would go than bearing their teſtimony from the preſs; or indeed where to find the authors themſelves.

3. Many of theſe worthy perſons have been reminded by their orthodox brethren, of a fulminating canon (the 73d in our preſent collection) which "ordains and conſtitutes, that no prieſts "or miniſters of the word of God, nor any other

" perſons, ſhall meet together in any private houſe " or elſewhere, to conſult upon any matter or " courſe to be taken by them, or upon their mo- " tion or direction, by any other, which may any " way tend to the impeaching or depraving of the " doctrine of the church of *England*, or of the book " of Common prayer, or of any part of the go- " vernment and diſcipline now eſtabliſhed in the " church of *England*, under pain of excommuuica- " tion *ipſo facto*." How difficult it would be to aſſemble a number of men, conſiderable enough to give weight to a petition to the Legiſlature for reformation, while this rod of correction is thus ſtuck up in their view; time, and a little more acquaintance with the world, will convince you. So far indeed as this canon relates to *other perſons*, not of the clergy, there is little reaſon to ſtand in awe of its operation. They however who have taken out the canonical ſting with reſpect to the Laity, have done it by ſuch arguments, as leave it in its full force of authority and animadverſion upon the Clergy. And though we are uſed to hear large and florid encomiums on the moderation of churchmen in the preſent age; yet---I know not how —whenever I find an orthodox brother proping up a tottering argument by citing *a canon*, I cannot forbear ſuſpecting, he would execute that canon upon me, if he was not reſtrained by ſomething which is not of an eccleſiaſtical complexion.

Thus much by way of ſurmiſe, why the ſcrupulous clergy have not hitherto ſought for relief by a public and formal application to the legiſlature.

" But why, being thus precluded from ſeeking " relief in a legal way, do they not reſign their pre- " ferments, ſince they are no longer in a condition " to fulfil their covenant with the church?"

To this queſtion, it would be ſtill harder to give an anſwer, by which *all* of them would be willing

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to abide. No body indeed has a right to aſk them ſuch a queſtion, excepting thoſe who are not yet come under the ſame obligations. Their orthodox brethren who are ſo very forward to interrogate them on this head, are juſt as much bound to give the public this ſatisfaction on *their own* account; and would probably find themſelves equally perplexed and embaraſſed in the attempt.* Dr. *Powell* has offered as much at leaſt for them *all*, as any *one* of them can ſay for himſelf. And if the ſound and ſtaunch ſons of the church have no better pleas than theſe, the church has the very ſame hold of *them*, that they think they have of their weaker brethren. Subſcription is a teſt of opinions to *both*, or to *neither*. And when it ceaſes to anſwer the purpoſes of a teſt, as upon the Doctor's principles it manifeſtly does, the church has no better ſecurity from a *Dean*, than from a *Diſquiſitor*; and has juſt as much reaſon to demand back her preferments from the *one*, as from the *other*.

But, Gentlemen, the queſtion, when it comes from *you* demands a more determinate anſwer. This recrimination will not affect *you*; not even ſuch of you, as may have ſubſcribed at the time of your matriculation. *That* Subſcription does not belong to *your* account, but to *theirs* under whoſe influence and direction you were obliged to make it. You have therefore a right to all the information that can be given you on this ſubject. And what follows, is the ſubſtance of what I have been able to gather, from the different accounts which particular perſons have given of themſelves in this ſituation.

* See a ſenſible and ſpirited pamphlet intitled, *A plain and proper anſwer to this queſtion*, Why does not the Biſhop of *Clogher*, ſuppoſing him to be author of the *Eſſay on Spirit*, reſign his preferments? *Printed for* Shuckburgh, 1753.

1. Moſt

1. Moſt of the thinking men among the Clergy, who are of any conſiderable ſtanding, very probably fall within the account that a learned Prelate, lately deceaſed, has left us of himſelf. "They "find they do not *now* agree exactly in ſentiment, "either with their own *former* opinions, or with "the perſons who drew up the articles of our "religion; or with the compilers of our Li-"turgy."*

But, ſays the author of a ſtupid malevolent pamphlet, "had you not time to conſider theſe things "before you took holy orders?"†

The good Biſhop (upon whoſe grave every lover of truth and liberty will drop a friendly tear) had the good nature, and the good manners, to give an anſwer, even to this croſs-grained nonſenſe.

"Gentlemen, ſays his lordſhip, are generally "ordained Prieſts, when they are twenty-four or "twenty-five years of age. And is this an age "for any perſon of a profeſſion to have his mind "made up, and never to attempt the improve-"ment of it afterwards? Is theology a ſcience of "ſo eaſy acquiſition, as to be throughly maſtered "at that time of life?"‡

Certainly *not*. And therefore what wonder, if a man who ſubſcribes to the articles with the fulleſt and firmeſt aſſent when he takes orders, ſhould after ten or twenty years, abate of his faith, upon finding a more probable account of ſome points of doctrine elſewhere.

But however this apology, reaſonable and juſt as it is, ſhould not be ſtretched farther to vindicate young and unwary ſubſcribers, than it will naturally reach; it is not neceſſary to the underſtanding the

* Dedication to the *Eſſay on Spirit*, pag. iv. London, 1751.
† Genuine ſequel to the *Eſſay on* Spirit.
‡ Some thoughts on *ſelf-love, innate ideas*, &c. Lond. for *Cooper* and *Baldwin*, 1753. pag. *ult.*

hardſhip

hardſhip of Subſcriptions, that a man ſhould be a through-paced Theologue. And the true caſe of a large majority perhaps, is, not that they wanted *time*, but *means* and *opportunity* to inform themſelves in this matter, before they were ordained. The ſtrong objections to our preſent ſyſtem, were not ſtirring in the days of their probation. There were none about them to point out to them the books where ſuch objections had been urged and ſupported heretofore. *Orthodoxy* was all in all with their teachers. They had heard of none who made *any* objections, but *Diſſenters*; and theſe, as well as their writings, they were taught to hold in the utmoſt contempt. Nor was it till late in life, and perhaps by mere accident, that ſome of them got quit of theſe prejudices at all.

"Well, but they *have* at laſt got quit of them, "and why ſhould they ſtill remain in the pale of "the church?"----To this it may be anſwered.

2. That many of them, too probably, avail themſelves of our Defender's quibble of aſſenting to the *uſe*, not the *truth* of the Liturgy; to which indeed the worthy prelate above cited hath in ſome degree given countenance, tho' not without fairly laying the true fact before his readers.* With reſpect to Subſcription to the articles, many are apt to lay hold of that *latitude*, aſſerted by Dr. *Clarke*, and other defenders of what Dr. *Waterland* called, *Arian* Subſcription; the ſame latitude indeed, pleaded for, and adopted by the Rev. Dr. *Powell*; but with this difference, that the Doctors *Clarke*, *Sykes*, &c. (little ſatisfied, it ſhould ſeem, with this expedient, and looking upon it as little better than what *Shakeſpeare* calls a *curſed neceſſity*) never forget to wind up their apologies with ſome complaints and animadverſions on ſuch kind of teſts, and warm

* Dedication to the *Eſſay*, &c. pag. xii, xiii, e. q. s.

remonſtrances

remonſtrances for a *review* of the particulars to which they relate; whereas the more modern Doctor aſſigns this *latitude* as an unanſwerable reaſon why Subſcriptions in their preſent form ſhould be continued to our lateſt Poſterity.—Whoever they are who betake themſelves to theſe ſhelters, muſt not be defended by me.

3. There are ſome, who, without being explicit as to the particular arguments by which they juſtify their conformity to themſelves, tell us, that they have been induced to continue in the church for ſome years paſt, by a ſanguine expectation that the Liturgy would certainly be reviewed and altered, and Subſcriptions put upon a more reaſonable footing. † Theſe expectations ſeem to have commenced, when the two metropolitical ſees were filled with two Gentlemen of very different ſentiments, as was ſuppoſed, from thoſe of ſome of their predeceſſors. They were eſteemed to be eminent patrons of liberty and moderation, and many perſons made no doubt, but under their auſpicious influence, all proper regard would be paid to the reaſonable and dutiful remonſtrances on the ſubject of conformity, of all his majeſty's proteſtant ſubjects in whatever circumſtances.

Expectations of this kind are readily propagated, and eagerly embraced by every one who is uneaſy under his preſent bonds. And they who conſider what has, or rather what has not been done during this interval, will be very likely to make it a problem, whether theſe diſſatisfied men are ſufficiently juſtified by *appearances*, in their long and patient acquieſcence. Time, which brings to light many hidden myſteries, may however produce ſome rea-

† See a Sermon preached to a large congregation in the country on *old Chriſtmas-day*, 1753. pag. 26. Printed for *A. Millar*.

ſons,

ſons, why they ſhould not be too crudely condemned. But,

4. There are among theſe ſome who think, that, with reſpect to their miniſterial calling, there is an obligation upon them to the ſupreme Lord of the harveſt, prior to all ſtipulations with any particular church. They conſider themſelves as called to, and placed in, their ſeveral ſtations by the providence of God. They were admitted to thoſe ſtations, without any conſciouſneſs on their part, of any thing wrong in the conditions required of them, and with the ſincereſt intentions of fulfilling their miniſtry according to the Goſpel of Chriſt. Since they have found their miſtake, they think their Chriſtian liberty allows them to act accordingly, and ſo likewiſe does the church, if ſhe is conſiſtent with herſelf. They therefore comply with the church's forms where they can, and where they cannot, they deviate from them. This they do without diſguiſe, and are ready to give a reaſon for their conduct to all who have a right to demand it. And if their own people have any objections to them or their miniſtry on this account, the law is open, and they may implead ſuch Paſtors before their reſpective Dioceſans. And ſhould their Lordſhips diſallow of the practice, theſe miniſters are ready to ſubmit, and to retire without the trouble of a formal proceſs.* But they can by no means be prevailed with, *voluntarily* to diſable themſelves

* See the *Preface* to Dr. *Burrow*'s Eſſay upon Divine Providence, p. 16. " If the moſt revd. Prelate, ſays this Gentleman, " to whoſe juriſdiction I am ſubject, ſhall conceive that I do, in " ſome points, *pelagianize*, or whatever elſe it may be called, more " than can ſafely be allowed a perſon beneficed in the church, " and having cure of ſouls to do; I ſhall make way for the effects " of authority, which are of an odious nature, in a manner leaſt " invidious and troubleſome, conſiſtent, I hope, with a good con- " ſcience, and attended with decency on my part; and I hope " alſo,

from doing the little good in their power, of which perhaps no other means are afforded, but in this particular province. They think their covenant with God, as *his Miniſters*, precludes them from *diſmiſſing themſelves* from *his* ſervice. In the mean time, they are contented with their lot, and ſome of them with very ſlender proviſions in the church, and would not repeat their Subſcriptions to gain the whole world.

But whatever conception ſcrupulous clergymen may have of *their own* ſituation and circumſtances,

" alſo, not with too great ſeverity of reflection on any other.—" I muſt own, that I have long and paſſionately ſighed after a diſ-" charge, ſuch as might not fix any reproach or diſhonour on " me, from a function and office, for which I look upon myſelf, " for other reaſons, utterly unfit."—Theſe *other reaſons* were an infirm ſtate of health, a ſevere gout, which in the end was fatal to this learned man. The *moſt rev.* Prelate here mentioned was Archbiſhop *Blackburne*, of whom, if I am not miſinformed, the Doctor deſired leave to reſign his living of *Darrington*. This was not permitted, and his Grace is reported to have ſaid on this occaſion; " I believe the man does not like us, and wants to leave " us; but I know his worth, and will not part with ſuch men for " ſmall matters." Dr. *Burrow* was indeed in all reſpects a worthy man, and it gives me pleaſure to have an opportunity of paying even this inſignificant tribute to the memory of one who deſerved to be more generally known and diſtinguiſhed, than his confinement and his modeſty would admit of. No body knew mankind better than the ſagacious Prelate above mentioned, and his determination of this caſe deſerves the higheſt applauſe. Probably it did not, and will not meet with it from men of narrower ſpirits. Be this as it will, the caſe itſelf is remarkable, and may ſerve to convince candid and generous minds that this affair of *reſigning* is attended with more difficulties than may at firſt ſight be apprehended. If you keep both your ſcruples and your preferment, you are immediately inſulted with the queſtion, *Why do you not reſign?* If you modeſtly propoſe your objections to the public, in hope of having them ſatisfied one way or other, ſome magiſterial zealot admoniſhes you, *not to affront the eſtabliſhment that maintains you.* If, laſtly, you reſign your preferments, there is, you ſee, *a ſeverity of reflection* to be dreaded from another quarter, a *reproach* and *diſhonour*, which as it proceeds from more impartial and more conſiderate cenſors, than intereſted churchmen, is much harder to be digeſted by ingenuous ſpirits, than theſe crude and illiberal expoſtulations from the latter.

the

the caſe of many of them is ſufficiently hard to demand great allowances from the candid and charitable hearts of *other* men. Many of them diſcover not the truth of the caſe, till it is too late to turn themſelves to *other* employments; and without *ſome* employment they muſt want bread for themſelves, and perhaps a large family †.

Some Gentlemen, indeed, of their own order, have, (with great benevolence no doubt) recommended it to them to go over to the Diſſenters. But who knows whether they might not find as much to diſguſt them *there*, as in the eſtabliſhed church? Whatever Dr. *Powell* may think of theſe *friends of freedom*, there are among them, men of no leſs candor or penetration than himſelf, who in making their objections to our eſtabliſhed forms, pay as little deference to the *mere prejudices* of Diſſenters, as he himſelf does. Confeſſing, nevertheleſs, that where theſe *prejudices* (if ſo they muſt be called) ſeem to have been inſtilled, and appear, even to this hour, to be warranted by the *written word*, not only the *Liturgy* and *Articles*, but even matters of more moment, ought to be *accommodated* to them.

The concluſion of the whole matter, GENTLEMEN, is this. You are yet under none of theſe hard neceſſities. If upon examining into the nature of the caſe here propoſed to your conſideration, you ſhould find yourſelf excluded from *the paradiſe* of eccleſiaſtical preferments,

The world is all before you, where to chuſe
Your place of reſt; and Providence your guide.

And I cannot but think it a lucky circumſtance, with reſpect to the probable event of ſuch an examination as I am here recommending, that the ſort of learning called *mathematical*, ſhould, at this par-

† See a Pamphlet intituled, *The Church of* England *tryed by herſelf.* Printed for *Noon*, 1756. p. 26-27.

ticular

ticular juncture, be cherifhed and cultivated, in *one* of our univerfities efpecially, with that zeal and eagernefs, as to become the indifpenfable groundwork for a tolerable proficiency in all your other ftudies; if indeed it is not eſteemed to be the marrow and quinteſſence of all other ſtudies itſelf.—A ſcience, which, beſides it's known reputation for fortifying the human mind againſt all invincible prejudices in *religious matters*, ſeems to be calculated for your ſucceſs in *military*, *naval*, *mercantile*, and *mechanical* employments, in ſhort, in almoſt any profeſſion or occupation under the ſun, rather than the *clerical*.

But however this circumſtance may be eſtimated by others, who know more of the matter than I can pretend to do, you are *now* timely apprized of your ſituation. You have the opportunity of a free and convenient intercourſe with each other. You may receive great light and aſſiſtance, by frequent and friendly debates and conferences upon this important ſubject, among yourſelves; and the ſenſible and conſcientious part of you, great encouragement to *hold faſt your integrity*: which, after all, is the *perſonal* concern of every one of you, in view of the common obligation you have to the *Lord of the vineyard* into which you are called, whatever ſtation may be aſſigned you in it.

And may *He* give his bleſſing to all your ſincere inquiries and honeſt endeavours in the ſearch of truth; ſtrengthen your hearts to abide by it, when it is found; direct your ſteps in the ways of piety and peace, in whatever province your lot may fall; and crown all your labours with everlaſting bliſs in the world to come.

I am, GENTLEMEN,
moſt ſincerely, your Wellwiſher,
and humble Servant in Chriſt,

THE AUTHOR.

Francis Blackburns Archd.n of Cleveland

REMARKS, &c.

A Defender of the Subſcriptions required in any proteſtant Church obliges himſelf by the nature of his Undertaking to prove, either that the particulars, to which the Subſcription is required, are in plain and perfect agreement with the written word of God; or that there is a ſufficient ſcriptural authority veſted in the Church to require ſuch Subſcriptions, altho' the agreement abovementioned cannot be clearly made out to the ſatisfaction of the Subſcriber.

Some of our moſt eminent Divines have employed their pens in ſupport of both theſe propoſitions, with much learning and ſubtlety of argument; but, as very candid and competent judges of ſuch matters have freely acknowledged, with no great ſucceſs. For having adopted different ſchemes of reconciling the conſtitution of the Church with the chriſtian Scriptures, they have plainly contradicted each other; and what is worſe, are very often inconſiſtent with themſelves.

We ſeem therefore of late to reſt the whole affair of *declaring* and *ſubſcribing* upon the *ſecular utility* of ſuch kind of Teſts in eſtabliſhed Churches, according to an ingenious Plan, deviſed by a Divine of ſome note ſtill living; in which the advocates for ſuch matters ſeem to have ſo perfectly acquieſced, that we have heard very little for ſome time of any new productions on this intereſting ſubject; except from ſome "honeſt, but miſtaken men," who think it is for the honour of every proteſtant Church, that

nothing ſhould be found in her conſtitution but what is fairly defenſible upon the original principles of her reformation from Popery.

But foraſmuch as theſe honeſt men ſeem rather to be *miſtaken* in the *application*, than in the *contexture* of their arguments, it is well underſtood, that no ſatisfactory anſwer can be given to them without diſcuſſing over again the two propoſitions abovementioned; and what have the learned pens of *Burnet*, *Bull*, *Nichols*, *Bennet*, *Waterland*, *Stebbing*, *Conybeare*, &c. &c. &c. left to be ſaid in this controverſy, which is either new or important?

It is probably for ſome ſuch reaſon as this, that ſeveral Tracts under the titles of *Free* and *candid Diſquiſitions*, *Appeals to reaſon*, *candor*, *common ſenſe*, &c. have been patiently ſuffered to take their courſe, and to make what impreſſions they might upon the public, either without any replies at all, or replies from ſuch hands, and in ſuch ſtrains, as neither had, nor deſerved to have the countenance of any one public character in the kingdom.

And indeed, as matters are now circumſtanced among us, the counſel of prudence ſeems to be not to anſwer one word to theſe *pretended* Reformers. Whatever *temporary* effect the facts and reaſonings they deal in may have upon young, ingenuous, and unbiaſſed minds; there is a time of life, which cometh upon all thoſe who are educated for the Church, when they will plainly perceive they muſt either conform, or loſe all the fruit of their ſtudies and expences. And who is ſo little acquainted with human nature as not to know, how forcibly conſiderations of this kind counteract any common ſcruples, in a large majority of thoſe who might otherwiſe be diſpoſed to entertain them? And as for the *Million*, who are not apt to be diſquieted with Qualms of this ſort, an habitual veneration for what

what they have heard ſo often called *the beſt conſtituted Church on earth*, reconciles them to the whole ſyſtem at once, without any ſuſpicion of the leaſt defect in any part of it.

Nor have the fruits of this taciturnity at all diſappointed the wiſdom and policy which projected it. The *Diſquiſitors* have ſubſided into obſcurity and oblivion: The Church keeps her ground, and is ſure never to want a ſufficient ſupply of *learned* and *able* men to anſwer all her occaſions upon her own terms.

And now in the midſt of this repoſe and tranquility, ſteps forth the zealous Dr. *Powell* once more to blow the trumpet of defiance in the ears of all diſſatisfied diſſenters from our eſtabliſhment; to the great ſurprize, as I have been informed, of ſome of the Church's warmeſt friends, who cannot find out the propriety of reviving on her part a controverſy, in which ſhe has ſeldom gathered any laurels, and which for that reaſon had been ſo prudently laid aſleep.

The Doctor has, it is true, gone a good deal out of the common road; ſo far indeed that his Sermon has but little affinity with what is promiſed in the title of it. The title, as I ſaid before, breathes nothing but defiance; but upon a nearer view of the champion and his weapons, you find him all lenity and indulgence, and diſpoſed to compromiſe matters by ſuch extraordinary conceſſions on the part of the Church, that one cannot help ſuſpecting he muſt have exceeded the bounds of his commiſſion, ſuppoſing him to have had any.

In one reſpect indeed the Doctor is highly intituled to the thanks of all thoſe who have in any degree diſapproved of theſe Subſcriptions in the Church of *England*, inaſmuch as he has done ſomething towards explaining an argument in behalf of them, which, tho' frequently made uſe of in common

converſation, has always appeared to have ſomething of a myſtery in it.

Much has been ſaid of late years by the advocates for the Church (whether with or without authority, I preſume not to determine) concerning the moderation and indulgence of our preſent worthy Prelates in *taking* the Subſcriptions of their clergy. From whence it is inferred, that the uſual objections and ſcruples about conformity are much more unreaſonable *now* than they were in the days of our fore-fathers.

"But how, ſays the man of ſcruples, am I to underſtand this? Has any clergyman lately been diſpenſed with from ſubſcribing at all? No, not even ſome who have offered to ſtand the peril of the Law againſt any who ſhould queſtion their title to their preferments without ſuch Subſcription.§ Has any clergyman for the laſt fifty years been permitted, in ſubſcribing his *aſſent* and *conſent* to the xxxix Articles, to vary the form? No, not one. And yet this *was* permitted even in the days of Archbiſhop *Laud*, if we may truſt thoſe extracts from the ſubſcription-book of *Sarum*, exhibited by Mr. *Dezmaizeaux* in his Life of *Chillingworth*.* Every one now is required to ſubſcribe his *aſſent* and *conſent* to theſe Articles in one invariable form of words, ſuppoſed indeed to be preſcribed by a Canon, but a Canon which was as much in force in the days of *Chillingworth* as at this preſent minute."

True, ſays theſe Gentlemen, but is it no advantage, no favour, that whereas the Biſhops of yore uſed to be a little inquiſitive in what ſenſe the candidate ſubſcribed, our preſent Governors content

§ See *Whiſton's* Memoirs of Dr. *S. Clarke*, page 89, 90.
* Page, 266, 267.

themſelves

themſelves with ſaying, "ſatisfie your ſelves, and you ſatisfie us."

"A very great favour indeed, ſays the ſcrupulous candidate, that I ſhould be permitted to prevaricate at my own peril! The Biſhop wants no ſatisfaction but the bare *act* of ſubſcribing to a certain form of words. His Lordſhip well knows the Law will put its own conſtruction upon the *act* ſo circumſtanced (if there ſhould be occaſion to have recourſe to his books) without taking the leaſt notice of any conſtruction I may put upon it for my own private ſatisfaction. And how can I ſatisfie my ſelf in *giving* a ſecurity to the Church in one ſenſe, which I know will be *taken* in *another?* Not to mention that when things were at the worſt, a man might probably contrive anſwers to ſatisfie the moſt inquiſitive examiner with as much eaſe as he can now find ſalvos to ſatisfie himſelf."

This is the difficulty which theſe "honeſt, but miſtaken men" cannot get over; and under which the utmoſt lenity and indulgence of our eccleſiaſtical Governors, as things are now eſtabliſhed, can afford them no relief. But it ſeems Dr. P. can; and to this end has undertaken this *Labour of love* now under our conſideration; in which he has ſucceeded ſo much to his own ſatisfaction as to be "greatly ſurprized that any who call themſelves "*our* friends, and the friends of freedom, ſhould "propoſe to alter the Liturgy and Articles, and "accommodate them to the *prejudices* of Diſſenters."

But why ſo greatly ſurprized? Every Remedy muſt have time to operate before you can judge of its effects. The world has not hitherto been apprized of theſe ingenious ſolutions exhibited in this *Defence*. And I am perſuaded, that, if the Dr. would give himſelf the trouble to look back into the ſtate of this controverſy in its ſeveral ſtages, from its firſt riſe to the preſent time, he will have the-

the pleaſure to diſcover that he is the *firſt* who ever thought of treating it in the manner he has done.

Indeed I am apt to ſuſpect that for want of this information the Doctor may have miſtaken the nature and force of the objections againſt which he hath oppoſed this *Defence*. And therefore, if now after he has tried this new experiment, it ſhould make no deeper impreſſions upon his "honeſt but miſtaken friends" than ſome others before it have done, few perhaps will be greatly ſurprized at it beſides himſelf.

Let us proceed then to take a particular view of this elaborate performance; at the head of which ſtands *part* of a ſentence taken from St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. *Now I beſeech you, Brethren, by the name of the Lord Jeſus, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions among you.*

On theſe words the Doctor thus comments: "It "is uſually of more importance to the peace and "happineſs of a community that its members "ſhould ſpeak than think alike." And the words of the Text with this interpretation upon them are offered as a ſpecimen of "St. Paul's wiſdom in "guarding his converts againſt thoſe miſchiefs "which frequently ariſe from frivolous and *un-*"*meaning* diviſions."

And without doubt a very wiſe expedient it is with reſpect to diviſions which have *no meaning*. In ſuch diviſions judgment and opinion have no place. And all differences among the parties *ſo* divided will be happily and completely reconciled, by bringing them to *ſpeak* alike, whether they *think* alike, or indeed whether they think at all or not.

But was this the caſe in the Church at *Corinth*? or did St. *Paul* believe it to be the caſe? ſo the Doctor would inſinuate, even though this 10th verſe is cloſed with theſe expreſs words, —*And that ye be perfectly united in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment:*

ment: By which it appears that the Apoſtle underſtood theſe diviſions among the *Corinthians* to have ſome meaning; and likewiſe that to *think* alike was equally of importance to the peace and happineſs of their community as to *ſpeak* alike.

Whether the Doctor may juſtly be ſuſpected of dropping this laſt clauſe of the verſe, to ſerve a preſent turn, I preſume not to determine. In matters of controverſy, ſome men's Bibles, if one may judge by the uſe they make of them, have no more in them than is juſt neceſſary for the *preſent diſtreſs*. But indeed, if the clauſe in queſtion were utterly expunged from the place it occupies, it is impoſſible that St. *Paul*, who talks ſo much in other places of the indiſpenſible importance of *ſimplicity* and *godly ſincerity*; of chriſtians *not lying* one to another, BECAUSE they are *members* of a *community*, &c. ſhould ever be made to own the ſentiments which the Doctor here endeavours to fix upon him.

The Doctor's maxim being thus ſtrip'd of it's pretences to apoſtolical authority, we may with the leſs preſumption inquire into the merit of it upon its own bottom.

" It is of more importance, ſays the Doctor, to " the peace and happineſs of a community that " its members ſhould ſpeak than think alike."

Perhaps it may, to the peace and happineſs of a community of hungry expectants at court: But would any one believe that the Doctor is here ſpeaking of a *religious*, and what is more, of a *chriſtian* community? Yet this is really the fact, and here follows the reaſon he offers in ſupport of his paradox.

" FOR they who have learned to confeſs their " Faith in the ſame form, WILL conſider each other " as friends, even tho' they ſhould diſagree not a " little in their explanations of it: While ſuch as " have been accuſtomed to different expreſſions,

" can

" can ſeldom be convinced that their opinions are " the ſame."

The Doctor I ſuppoſe will allow, that theſe *diſagreeing explanations* muſt be *expreſſed*, if it is only for the ſake of finding out that the explainers *diſagree* at all. If they *are* expreſſed, they muſt be *differently* expreſſed. And it ſhould ſeem to have required ſome of the Doctor's pains to ſhew how different expreſſions tend to reconcile men to each other's opinions, in *one* of theſe caſes rather than the *other*. The Hiſtories we have of every part of the known world, demonſtrate that this *friendſhip* in different explanations, is not the natural effect of men's " learning to confeſs their Faith in the ſame Form." How ſuch *confeſſors* WILL conſider each other hereafter, when the Doctor's ſyſtem comes to be univerſally received and authenticated, time only can diſcover. What we know for certain is, that multitudes of them not only *conſider*, but actually *treat* each other as the bittereſt Enemies: And what is extremely unlucky for the Doctor's Hypotheſis, no community upon earth in proportion to its extent, hath furniſhed more examples of this, than the very Church he is defending.

" For THESE reaſons, the Doctor informs us, the " wiſeſt and beſt friends of our religious eſtabliſh- " ment, have long wiſhed that all Proteſtants in this " kingdom could be united by a conſent to the " ſame Liturgy and the ſame Articles of Faith."

But if for *theſe* reaſons, why not all Papiſts as well as all Proteſtants? Upon the Doctor's plan of peace and happineſs, mental reſerves, and other accommodating methods of equivocation, can have but few bad effects upon the community. If men *ſpeak* alike, it is of the leſs importance what they *think*. And there is one conſideration, which ought to extend the wiſhes of theſe good and wiſe friends to the Papiſts in a more particular manner; and that is, that they have

have been, and are ſtill like to be ſufficiently troubleſome to the community, and that too from this very circumſtance " of confeſſing their faith in a different form."

For my own part, as the Doctor produces no authentic commiſſion from theſe beſt and wiſeſt friends of our eſtabliſhment, to be their prolocutor, I ſhould have been as well pleaſed to have ſeen their own reaſons for their own wiſhes. Many of them muſt know that the founders of the eſtabliſhment to which they are ſaid to be friends, went upon different grounds. And many good and wiſe friends of that eſtabliſhment have not ſcrupled to acknowledge, that the eſtabliſhment it ſelf could not be vindicated without aſſerting a right founded in chriſtian liberty, of diſſenting from the *ſame* Liturgy and the *ſame* Articles of Faith, by which the members of the popiſh eſtabliſhment in this kingdom were united. And it cannot but have an uncouth appearance, that the beſt and wiſeſt friends of the preſent eſtabliſhment, ſhould wiſh to procure it a temporary and fallacious peace upon thoſe very principles which would have prevented its exiſtence.

But the Doctor does " not mean a conſent forced " or feigned; but given freely and ſincerely; not- " withſtanding ſome ſmall difference of ſentiments, " about points of ſpeculation or ceremonies.

Which, as I take it, isvindic atingthe Proteſtantiſm of theſe our beſt and wiſeſt friends, at the expence of their common ſenſe. For what ſort of a conſent is this? A *free* and *ſincere*, that is, a *perfect* conſent, given by *different* men to the *ſame* Liturgy, and the *ſame* Articles of Faith, excludes all poſſible difference of ſentiments among thoſe who are *united* by ſuch conſent. Surely the Doctor's friends cannot be ſo abſurd as to wiſh for a conſent *in* different ſentiments. A ſort of *conſent* juſt as *unmeaning* as the ſuppoſed *diviſions* among the *Corinthians*.

But what does the Doctor talk of "ſome *ſmall* "difference of ſentiments about points or ſpecula- "tion of ceremonies," when it is but on the oppoſite page that he undertakes, "to ſhew that "*great* liberty is left for a difference of judgments "in matters either not plain (points of ſpeculation) "or not important; (ceremonies;)? *So great indeed*, "that one might reaſonably hope it would extend "to every man, whoſe principles are not deſtruc- "tive of our Church and Nation, Pag. 7."

It would be very hard to ſay what particulars in our Liturgy and Articles might not be reduced to one of theſe two heads, *viz.* points of ſpeculation, or ceremonies; and harder ſtill to ſay, how far men might *not* differ about theſe, without eſpouſing principles deſtructive of our Church and Nation. And if this indefinite liberty in differing may be taken, and is ſtill conſiſtent with a free and ſincere conſent to the ſame Liturgy and the ſame Articles of Faith, it is amazing to me that there ſhould be one Diſſenter in the whole kingdom.

But by the way, I wiſh the Doctor does not draw theſe beſt and wiſeſt friends of our eſtabliſhment into a ſnare, by promiſing more liberty in their name, than they would, upon trial, be willing to allow. "To promote this union, he tells us, much "has been already done by thoſe, who have ex- "plained with moderation and clearneſs the "ſeveral parts of our eccleſiaſtical conſtitution." Who theſe are, what they have done, and with what ſucceſs we partly know. But it ſeems they have not done enough. Then comes this great remover of difficulties, and he undertakes to ſhew that a free and ſincere conſent to the ſame Liturgy and the ſame Articles of Faith may be reaſonably given by men who differ ever ſo widely about points of ſpeculation or ceremonies, provided their reſpective principles are not deſtructive of our Church or Na-

tion. And after this, what can that "ſomething" be which, as the Doctor inſinuates, "remains to be "done hereafter"? Unleſs perhaps ſome unborn Defender ſhould ſtart up at a future Commencement, and inſiſt that the liberty contended for in this ſermon, may reaſonably be extended to thoſe men whoſe principles *are* deſtructive of our Church or Nation.

For my part, I know no better or wiſer friends of our religious eſtabliſhment, in its *preſent* circumſtances than our appointed Paſtors and Overſeers; and I cannot eaſily perſuade my ſelf that *they* are ſo ready to wiſh for theſe openings in the fences of the Church, or to receive all who might be willing to enter in at them. And that my opinion is not wholly groundleſs, I appeal to the Defender himſelf.

"The Diſſenters, ſays he, have been rendered ob-"ſtinate in matters perfectly inſignificant." Pag. 6.

Inſignificant, to whom? Not to the Diſſenters; for "they ſuppoſe it neceſſary for every man to de-"termine theſe matters before he can aſſent to our "Liturgy." They are the fathers and ſons of the Church then, to whom theſe matters are frivolous and inſignificant; ſo inſignificant it ſeems, that they would have been long ago forgot, if the Diſſenters had not kept the diſputes about them on foot. But if theſe matters might have been *forgot* without any detriment to the Church, they certainly might now be *ſpared*. And if the Church ſtill inſiſts upon compliance with theſe matters, as terms of admiſſion into her communion or her miniſtry, who or what is it that is anſwerable for this obſtinacy of the Diſſenters? This refuſal of honeſt but miſtaken men? or the conduct of thoſe leſs honeſt men who aſſent without conviction? Where does the *perverſeneſs* begin? At thoſe who treat theſe obſcure, unimportant, perfectly inſignificant matters, as if they

were plain, and clear, and of the utmoſt importance; or at thoſe, who, in reverence to what they really think an higher authority, cannot be perſuaded to have them ſo treated? Can it be ſuppoſed that the friends of a religious eſtabliſhment which gives all this conſequence to theſe *inſignificant* matters, would be willing to allow of a Liberty in aſſenting to them, which, as the Doctor explains it, would amount to a total abolition of them?

The Doctor indeed ſeems to be of opinion that, in matters of this nature, there is no authority ſuperior to that of the Church, for, "he will not enter "into any debate with thoſe, who calling themſelves "ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, and members of the "catholic Church, aſſert their freedom from all "human impoſitions, AND will not ſubmit to any "terms of communion." Pag. 7.

But is it neceſſary that he who aſſerts his freedom from all human impoſitions, ſhould at the ſame time renounce all terms of communion? DOES not the Doctor know, that what the men he here alludes to, oppoſe to human impoſitions, are the terms of communion preſcribed in the ſcriptures, conſidered as the word of GOD? Unleſs perhaps the Doctor may imagine that the ſcriptures preſcribe *no* terms of communion.

At the the firſt reading of this paſſage I ſuppoſed the miſtake muſt have been made at the preſs; and that the Doctor's M S. had certainly exhibited "any *ſuch* terms of communion." But I preſently ſaw this would not do; for then this catholic chriſtian would not have been like the citizen of the world, who in the Doctor's account, is plainly free from all particular pacts and ſyſtems of civil policy whatever. A very decent compariſon in the mouth of a chriſtian Divine! who ſhould not be ignorant, that a ſervant of *Jeſus Chriſt* hath *one* Maſter, who hath left him very full and plain directions concerning his

his religious commerce with his brethren; and who hath injoyned him to purſue thoſe directions in oppoſition to any doctrines or commandments of men, which are inconſiſtent with them.

"Should a man, ſays the Doctor, adhere to this "principle, [his freedom from human impoſitions] "he could never join in any public worſhip." How ſo? why, "not only the times and places "and ceremonies of it, but the words alſo, muſt "either be appointed by common conſent, or cho-"ſen by him who preſides in each congregation. "And that conſcience muſt be ſtrangely perverſe "which can ſubmit to the directions of a ſingle "perſon, and not to the authority of the public."

Very true, ſuppoſing theſe *directions* and this *authority* to have reſpect to the *ſame* human impoſitions. But ſhould *that* conſcience, after the moſt deliberate inquiry, be convinced that what is appointed by common conſent, or directed by a ſingle perſon, is in perfect agreement with the word of God; and that what is preſcribed by public authority is contrary to it; or if in the *one* caſe, nothing is impoſed on *that* conſcience without its conſent, while in the *other*, its conſent is neither aſked nor regarded; the Doctor, I'm afraid, muſt acquit *that* conſcience of all ſtrange perverſeneſs, or deprive the church of *England* of one of her faireſt apologies for ſeparating from the church of *Rome*.

The inquiry therefore is not *thus* reduced to ſo narrow limits as the Doctor pretends: unleſs he intends to reſt his argument thus: "A Liturgy may "be preſcribed,—may be honeſtly conformed to— "therefore *our* Liturgy." This indeed cuts ſhort all inquiry concerning either the merits of the Liturgy, or the Authority by which it is impoſed; and renders all thoſe hypothetical *ifs* concerning the doctrines, the propriety of the ſervice, and the

ſincerity

ſincerity of him who conforms to it, with which this curious paragraph is cloſed, utterly impertinent to the point in hand.

And, to own our obligations to him, the Doctor ſeems very well diſpoſed to ſave this conſcience the trouble of ſo diffuſive an inquiry. "The declarer's "aſſent, ſays he, is to be given to the *uſe* not the "*truth* of the Liturgy."

But here I would beg leave to queſtion the fact. The aſſent under conſideration is thus expreſſed. "*I N. N. do willingly and* ex animo *aſſent that the* "*Book of Common prayer, and ordering of biſhops,* "*prieſts and deacons, containeth in it nothing con-* "*trary to the word of God; and that it may lawfully* "*ſo be uſed.*" i. e. As containing nothing contrary to the word of God. Does not every one ſee, that the aſſent thus required to the *uſe* of the Liturgy, plainly implies an aſſent likewiſe to the *truth* of it? or, what is the ſame thing in the language of Proteſtants, an aſſent to its agreement with the word of God?

Perhaps the Doctor may allude to another Form, *that* in the act of Uniformity, where the declaration injoined is indeed ſuppoſed to refer to the *uſe* only of the Liturgy, the ground of which notion we ſhall preſently examine. But as the aſſent abovementioned is always *ſubſcribed*, on the ſame occaſions, by the ſame perſons who *declare* the other: it was hardly fair in the Doctor not to take them both together, eſpecially as the defence of *ſubſcriptions* is what he more expreſsly undertakes in this diſcourſe.

But let us take the matter in his own way, and ſee what he would make of it. "This aſſent then, "which is given to the *uſe*, not the *truth* of the "Liturgy, cannot, he tells us, be underſtood to "extend farther, than to an approbation of the "doctrine,

" doctrine, which it [the Liturgy] openly profeſſes, " or with which it has an evident and neceſſary " connexion." Pag. 8.

Cannot be underſtood to extend farther! Not *ſo far*, I ſhould think, unleſs a man may honeſtly *approve* doctrines, which he may not *believe to be true*. But this probably the Doctor does not chuſe to hold, at leaſt in plain terms. And to do him juſtice, he is here only hunting for a diſtinction between theſe *doctrines*, and ſome other parts of the Liturgy, with reſpect to which, as he would inſinuate, the aſſent does not extend *ſo far* as *approbation*. An undertaking indeed of no ſmall difficulty, conſidering that the aſſent is given in the very ſame words, to *all* parts of the Liturgy alike. But the neceſſity is urgent, and he muſt try.

" No body, ſays he, ever aſks concerning a pe- " tition or a rule, whether it be true; but whether " it be decent, proper, reaſonable, uſeful."

All that can be meant by this is, that he who ſhould ſay, " a petition or a rule is, or is not *true*," would not ſpeak with critical exactneſs. But in every petition there is ſome *allegation*, concerning the *truth* of which, every one, I ſuppoſe, to whom the petition is addreſſed, takes ſome care to be informed. And he who prefers a petition ought to be ſatisfied that the matters of fact, or the reaſons ſuggeſted why his petition ſhould be granted, are true; becauſe on this circumſtance the decency and propriety of his petition will chiefly depend. And ſo likewiſe, concerning a rule, a rule of religion at leaſt, intended to direct me to a reaſonable and uſeful manner of divine worſhip. And indeed of *ſuch* a rule, I ſee not why truth or falſehood may not be predicated with the utmoſt propriety of language. So that every way, in the caſe of the Liturgy, if you ſhould only aſk whether the *doctrines* of it are

true;

true; the *rules* and *petitions*, which "openly profeſs "theſe doctrines, and are evidently and neceſſarily "connected with them," muſt be equally concerned in, and affected by the anſwer as the doctrines themſelves.

But to what purpoſe is all this trifling? Is it not juſt as abſurd for a man to aſſent to *indecent* and *improper* petitions, *unreaſonable* and *uſeleſs* rules, as *falſe* doctrines? Might not the Doctor juſt as well limit the *aſſent* to the *uſe* of this Liturgy as it is diſtinguiſhed from the *decency*, *propriety*, *reaſonableneſs* of it, as from the *truth* of it? And there indeed does his argument end. "If ſuch, ſays he, "be our public Service (i. e. decent, proper, &c.) "we may do *more* than *aſſent* to it; we may heartily "and thoroughly *approve* it." As much as to ſay, we may do *leſs* than *approve* the Liturgy, and yet *aſſent* to it: we may *aſſent* to it, tho' it ſhould not be *ſuch*; tho' it ſhould *not* be decent, proper, reaſonable or uſeful.

"Thus, ſays the Doctor, the law which requires "his aſſent, explains it." The law is then very complaiſant in explaining what I am perſuaded all the divinity in *Cambridge* cannot explain, namely how an *aſſent* may be underſtood to extend to the *approbation* of doctrines, without extending to the *truth* of them.

If the Doctor means that the law *explains* the aſſent to be given to the *uſe*, not the *truth* of the Liturgy: the contrary is ſo evident by the teſtimony of a record, exhibiting the full ſenſe of the legiſlature itſelf upon this ſubject, that one cannot help being amazed at the aſſurance of thoſe, who yet perſiſt to ſcreen themſelves by ſo weak a pretence.

The learned Doctor *Edmund Calamy* proclaimed this, ſo long ago as the year 1704. He had then upon his hands, as an antagoniſt, a celebrated writer,

writer, and now venerable prelate of the church of England, who was not to be impoſed upon, either by falſe aſſertions or ſophiſtical reaſoning; and who, being preſſed with this matter of fact, in anſwer to what he had advanced to the contrary, found nothing to reply but that he "had heard "the truth of Dr. *Calamy*'s account much con-"teſted." However the Doctor having appealed to the journals of the Houſe of Lords, and repeated the ſame account without any variation in the year 1713, and, as far as ever I could hear, without any farther contradiction, I will now tranſcribe it, as well for the ſake of confronting Dr. *Powell*, as for a memorial to ſome others, who might otherwiſe be apt to forget or to overlook a piece of hiſtory they are ſo much concerned to take notice of.

"On *July* the 18th, 1663. a Bill was ſent up "from the Commons to the Lords, intituled, An "Act for the relief of ſuch Perſons as by Sickneſs "or other impediment are diſabled from ſubſcrib-"ing the Declaration in the Act of Uniformity, "and Explanation of part of the ſaid Act. At the "ſecond reading in the Houſe of Lords it was "committed. Some Alterations and Amend-"ments were made by the Committee, and a Clauſe "added of this Tenor: *And be it enacted and de-"clared by the Authority aforeſaid, that the Declara-"tion and Subſcription of Aſſent and Conſent in the "ſaid Act mentioned, ſhall be underſtood only as to the "Practice and Obedience to the ſaid Act, and not "otherwiſe.* This additional Clauſe was agreed to "by a Majority; but twelve Lords proteſted "againſt it as deſtructive to the Church of *Eng-"land* as now eſtabliſhed. When the Bill was "ſent back to the Commons, they deſired a Con-"ference, which was yielded to by the Lords. The "Commons vehemently declared againſt the

" Amendments and Alterations of the Lords, and " the additional Clauſe; and it was openly de- " clared by one of the Managers on the part of the " Commons, that what was ſent down to them " touching this Bill had neither Juſtice nor Pru- " dence in it. When the Conference was over, the " Lords voted an Agreement with the Commons, " and dropp'd the Additional Clauſe before re- " cited." *

This may ſuffice to ſhew how the Law *explains* this aſſent to the Liturgy; and if " common ſenſe " *requires* that it ſhould be *otherwiſe* explained," it can only be the common ſenſe of thoſe who find themſelves induced by various temptations to aſ- ſent to what they neither approve nor believe to be true.

" But, the Doctor is of opinion that even this part " of its [the Liturgy's] character [namely its de- " cency, propriety, &c.] has been ſometimes exa- " mined too ſcrupulouſly. We meet with demands " on one ſide, ſays he, and boaſts on the other, of " ſuch perfection, as never was found, nor pro- " bably *ever* will be, in any human compoſi- " tion."

Here I beg the Doctor's leave to diſtinguiſh be- tween the perfection *demanded*, and the perfection *boaſted of*. The Diſſenters and others who require perfection in the Liturgy, require only that it ſhould be modeled as near as may be to the plan of public worſhip laid down in the word of God. They inſiſt, that the ſcriptures of the New Teſta- ment contain a plan ſufficiently perfect for the ends of ſuch worſhip, without the addition of any in- ventions or impoſitions of men. They think that ſuch inventions and impoſitions diſparage and cor- rupt the worſhip of God. And whenever the Li-

* Dr. *Calamy*'s Def. of mod. Nonconformity, Part 2d. p. 119. and Abridgment, p. 205.

turgy

turgy ſhall be ſo reformed as to have no doctrines, injunctions, forms or rites, but ſuch as are contained in the ſaid ſcriptures, or may be proved thereby, they will be ſatisfied.

But the boaſted perfection of our *preſent* Liturgy is of quite another ſort, and is eſtimated by a very different teſt. A perfection which comprehends "all the purity and ſolemnity only, which the "wiſeſt MEN CAN DEVISE;" a perfection depending upon an hundred traditions, imaginations, political fitneſſes and expediences, of which Chriſt or his Apoſtles made no mention.

To ſay, therefore, that all human compoſitions are liable to imperfection, may be very proper to reſtrain the arrogance and preſumption of theſe *boaſters*; but is utterly impertinent when applied to the demands of thoſe who deſire to have the Liturgy altered and improved upon another bottom, and who mark out an unerring rule by which ſuch alterations and improvements ſhould be made.

"But how if the word of God itſelf ſhould be "deſtitute of that imaginary perfection, for want "of which you reject the Liturgy?" Aye, there indeed you bring the anſwer home to the demanders with a witneſs. But how do you prove this imperfection in the book of God? Why, "even "in the holy ſcripture itſelf, ſome portions have "been thought leſs proper to be publicly read." Thought leſs proper! By whom? By the compilers of the preſent Liturgy, we ſuppoſe, againſt whom however Dr. *Powell* very well knows the Diſſenters object as incompetent judges of a *proper* ſervice; and whoſe word therefore is very unlikely to be taken for this *imperfection* in the word of God.

We will however ſuppoſe the compilers to be in the right in this matter, and that theſe portions of Scripture are really leſs proper to be publicly read:

what is the conſequence? That the Scriptures are imperfect? No, the Doctor himſelf will allow that even theſe parts which are leſs proper for *public* reading, are profitable, and (I will take the liberty to add) perfect for the uſe of private exhortation, reproof, and inſtruction in righteouſneſs. Where then is the ſimilitude between the two caſes? If any parts of our public Liturgy are *leſs proper* for *public* uſe, for what are they profitable or perfect beſides?

But Diſſenters object to our Liturgy, as well on account of "real blemiſhes," as the want of perfection. Upon which the Doctor aſks, "is there in "our Liturgy any abſurdity ſo glaring as to be vi- "ſible to every eye? Is there any impiety ſo mon- "ſtrous as to ſhock every devout worſhiper?" And he pleaſes himſelf with anſwering, "Our "moſt ſcrupulous adverſaries never pretended it."

Nor do I ſuppoſe, they ever pretended there were ſuch abſurdities or impieties in a maſs book, as were viſible to *every* eye, or ſhocking to *every* devout worſhiper. There have been ſuch beings in the world in all ages, as blind leaders of the blind: And it will ever be the intereſt of ſome *who ſee*, to keep back abſurdities and impieties in public ſyſtems from glaring in the eyes of the common people. But very few proteſtant divines have openly pretended to avail themſelves of the blindneſs of the people, or of the artifices of ſuch impoſing leaders.

What advantage then to his cauſe can the Doctor make of this conceſſion? If the adverſary aſſert that theſe abſurdities and impieties are in the Liturgy, whether the people are ſhocked with them, or ſee them, or not; it is *his* buſineſs as a *defender*, to join iſſue in good earneſt, and to ſhew that the Liturgy is clear of all ſuch real blemiſhes, and that nothing of this ſort can be imputed to it.

He

He would indeed have it underſtood, that the objections of our adverſaries do not imply that there are *any* abſurdities or impieties in the Liturgy at all. For he tells us " their complaints relate chiefly " to thoſe appointments, in which there was the " greateſt room for a difference in men's judgment " or fancy. Of what length the public ſervice ſhould " be, into how many parts it may conveniently be " divided, what paſſages of the Scriptures ought to " be intermixed with it, how often ſome of our " moſt important petitions may be repeated, either " in the ſame or a different form; theſe and *ſuch* " *as theſe* are the matters in controverſy: matters " of ſo uncertain a nature, that it might be difficult " to find two thinking men, *if even thinking men* " *were not guided by faſhion*, who would determine " them exactly alike."

Are then *theſe* and *ſuch as theſe* in very deed, the matters *only* or even *chiefly* in controverſy? If the Doctor really thought ſo, he muſt be very little acquainted with the true ſtate of it. Nothing ſurely but the profoundeſt ignorance or diſſimulation could have drawn any man into this partial and unfair account of the matters in debate between the Diſſenters and the church of *England* concerning the Liturgy.

I have now a ſmall, but very ſenſible pamphlet lying before me, printed no longer ſince than the year 1755, wherein I find the following objections to the Liturgy, enumerated in a note at the bottom of the page.

" The order for reading the apocryphal romances " of *Tobit*, *Bel* and the *Dragon*.--*Sponſors* introduced " to the excluſion of the *parents*.---The queſtions " put to the *infant*, and the anſwers expected from " it in the *office* of *Baptiſm*.---The authoritative ab- " ſolution and forgiveneſs of all ſin directed to be " pronounced in *the Viſitation of the Sick*.---The " expreſſions

" expreſſions of ſtrong hope of the happineſs after " death of ſome of the vileſt of men in *the office for* " *Burial.*---The *creed* call'd *Athanaſius*'s, with the " dreadful ſentence of damnation on every ſoul of " man, that doth not throughly believe it." *

Can the Doctor ſuppoſe that the men who make *theſe*, and other *ſuch* objections *as theſe* to our Liturgy, will acknowledge that they ſee no glaring abſurdities, no ſhocking impieties in it? or can he pretend that *theſe* are of ſo *uncertain* a nature, that even *thinking men* may give them up to the *faſhion*, without any juſt imputation either upon their good ſenſe or their integrity?

" The ſame anſwer, ſays the Defender, may be " given in *all* diſputes concerning the ceremonies " obſerved in public worſhip. Whether it be more " decent on one occaſion for the miniſter to kneel; " on another for the people to ſit, can never be " determined by any principles of reaſon." p. 10.

If this however may be determined by principles of *Scripture*, it will, I imagine be juſt as ſatisfactory to thoſe who object to the ceremonies. The merit of the Doctor's argument lies wholly in his equivocal uſe of the word *decent*. *Decency* is a relative term; and when applied to cuſtoms merely *popular*, depends entirely upon *faſhion*; and then, what is *faſhionable* is *decent*, whether it be ſtrictly *reaſonable* or not. But when you ſpeak of *religious* cuſtoms directed by an uniform and invariable rule given by God himſelf, then whatever is not agreeable to that rule, is according to the ſtricteſt principles of reaſon, *indecent*.

To explain this matter by an example in point. The Diſſenters object to kneeling at the Lords-ſupper; and allege, that being adminiſtred by Chriſt, and received by the Apoſtles in a *Table*-poſture; the ſame muſt ſtill be the requiſite poſture in the cele-

* *Serious and Free Thoughts on the preſent State of the Church.* p. 21.

bration

bration of it. If indeed the Diſſenters ſhould ſay it would be *indecent* to celebrate the Lord's-ſupper otherrwiſe than lying along upon couches, which was the *Table*-poſture at the time of its inſtitution; the Doctor's obſervation would perhaps be of ſome force againſt them: Becauſe *faſhion*, and not *reaſon*, muſt determine which of the two *Table*-poſtures, the ancient one of lying along, or the modern one of ſitting upright, is the more *decent*. But in the preſent caſe, it is not *one* Table-poſture that is oppoſed to *another*: But a *Table*-poſture oppoſed to a poſture of *adoration* which has been uniformly uſed as ſuch, in all ages and places throughout the world. This poſture of adoration, they inſiſt, ought not to be uſed, but when you are addreſſing your ſelf to a proper object of adoration. In the Lord's-ſupper is no ſuch object, (unleſs you admit the doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation) and to uſe a ceremony of adoration where there is nothing to be adored, is one degree at leaſt of idolatry.*

I have taken the pains to ſtrip the Doctor of his ſophiſtry in this paſſage, that his readers may not be impoſed upon by what perhaps at the firſt glance,

* Some of the Divines of the church of *England*, perceiving this plain argument to bear very hard upon the common practice, have thought fit to ſay, "that the communicant may addreſs himſelf to God, in reference to the action he is about, with great propriety, and conſequently upon his knees;" and accordingly, have furniſhed and recommended to the people a number of Books, called, *Weeks Preparations*, *Companions to the Altar*, and ſo forth, as uſeful directories on theſe occaſions. But what ſay the Rubrics to all this? Do they give countenance to the uſe of ſuch Books, or indeed to the uſe of any prayers at all during the *action* of receiving, to which only the diſpute relates? No, not by a ſingle hint. And indeed how ſhould they? Such directories only ſerving to confound the private devotions of the communicant with the public ſervice of the Church. For who can attend to both at once? And what becomes of our Doctor's *unity of worſhip*, while both are going forwards together? This therefore is not defending the Liturgy, but their own conceits.

might

might appear to be ſenſe. Indeed I am not ſatisfied that the Doctor himſelf was not impoſed upon by his own artifice; inaſmuch as he ſeems not to have the leaſt conception, that ceremonies of any ſort have any thing to do with the ſcriptures, or the ſcriptures with them. For thus he goes on;

"The greateſt part of mankind always think "that ceremony *right*, to which they have been "accuſtomed. Nor are they much miſtaken. For "in matters of this ſort nothing is plainly *wrong* "but change."

In plain Engliſh, "all ceremonies, religious as well as others, which have preſcription on their ſide, are *right*; and they only in the *wrong* who attempt to change or aboliſh them. The ancient pagan ceremonies were *right*, ſo are the mahometan; ſo were the jewiſh ceremonies; and tho' the ceremonies which have ſucceeded them have gained *an indiſputable title by long and quiet poſſeſſion*, yet the attempt to change them at firſt was certainly *wrong*. In purſuance of this doctrine, the Papiſts were *right* in *their* ceremonies before the reformation; and the Proteſtants a ſet "of honeſt perhaps, but miſtaken "men, who ſent ſo many of them a packing." This is done like a workman, and may with a good grace pretend to the ſolemn thanks of the next ſeſſion of the congregation *de propaganda fide*.

"But, adds the Defender, whether the point in "diſpute be of greater or leſs importance; capable "of being exactly defined or not; yet he who, "without public authority, aſſumes to himſelf the "determination of it, aſſumes a power which "every man might claim with equal reaſon."

Undoubtedly; and why not? provided the aſſumer *regulates* his *determination* by the word of God. Who or what ſhall determine me in an acceptable manner of worſhiping God (which is my own affair,

affair, and can be no man's elſe, but in ſo far as he is concerned for himſelf) but the word of God? And where is the harm or the inconvenience of admitting this claim?

The Doctor tells us indeed, that "this is a power "which if every man ſhould exerciſe, all united "worſhip muſt totally ceaſe."

If it *muſt*, there is no help for it. But I would willingly flatter myſelf, that there is neither ſo profound an obſcurity in the directions given for *united worſhip* in the ſcriptures; nor ſo extreme a perverſeneſs in mankind, as theſe unguarded expreſſions ſeem to imply.

Unity of *worſhip*, according to the ſcriptures, conſiſts in the agreement of the worſhipers, *as touching any thing they ſhall ask of their heavenly Father in the name of Chriſt*. And *Chriſt* himſelf hath declared, that where *two* or *three* ſo agreeing, are gathered together in his name, their worſhip is ſufficiently *united* to be both acceptable and effectual. Is it impoſſible for *two* or *three* pious and ſincere men, to *unite* in *theſe* terms of worſhip? Much rather poſſible, I ſhould think, than for two or three hundred to unite in forms, which contain "matters of "ſo uncertain a nature, that it might be difficult "to find two thinking men,—who would deter-"mine them exactly alike: and with reſpect to "which, it muſt often happen, that they who will "not withdraw themſelves from thoſe religious "aſſemblies where ſuch terms are impoſed, will be "obliged to comply with forms which they do not "wholly approve."

What idea the Defender may have of *united worſhip*, or what opinion of its neceſſity, would be difficult to find out by any thing he has ſaid on the ſubject. He ſeems to place it in a mere *external* conformity to the *ſame* modes of worſhip: ſince the conceſſions abovementioned are abſolutely in-

 conſiſtent

conſiſtent with the ſuppoſition of *internal agreement*. Either way, I'm afraid it will turn out, to the Doctor's great misfortune, that even the church of *England* herſelf is liable to *ceſſations* of united worſhip in ſome degree. I have obſerved *ſome* worſhipers in *this* church, and I have heard of *more*, who, the moment the miniſter begins the *Athanaſian* creed, ſhut their books and ſit down, till it is finiſhed. *Others* there are, who ſignify by their behaviour, their diſſent to the uſe of certain imprecations in the *Pſalms*, as highly improper in a *Chriſtian* aſſembly, whether they who repeat them, have any particular application for them or not. There are ſtill *more*, who expreſs their embarraſment and diſſatisfaction with other parts of the liturgy, and make no ſcruple to declare they *never join in them*. Would not the Defender's diſtinction between the *uſe* and the *truth* of the liturgy, be juſt as neceſſary to reſtore unity of *worſhip* in the church, as unity of *aſſent* and *ſubſcription*?

Indeed the poor clergy, and their pariſh clerks, appear to me to be the only *thinking* men, who are abſolutely under the *guidance of faſhion*, in this unhappy caſe. And when one conſiders that ſuch *forms* as theſe gentlemen *do not wholly approve*, may have the outward appearance of a ſolemn addreſs to the great *ſearcher of hearts*, in what the Doctor calls, *ſome of our moſt important petitions*, there is but one reflection which the common ſenſe of mankind will *naturally* ſuggeſt upon the occaſion; and which, out of tenderneſs to the parties concerned, I willingly forbear to mention. The condition of many of them is indeed full of diſtreſs and difficulty: and theſe it is our duty both to pity, and to pray for. But I can think of no other defence that is to be made for them, but by ſhifting the *Woe* from *them*, to thoſe *by whom the offence cometh*,

or

or being now become notorious, *by whom it is ſtill continued.*

But what occaſion for all theſe minute diſquiſitions in the caſe of the liturgy? "In other caſes, "ſimilar to this which we are conſidering, ſays the "Defender, men do not perplex themſelves with "the ſame difficulties. It was never agreed, what "is the moſt convenient form of civil government. "Yet except ſome few *whoſe enthuſiaſm has ap-* "*proached to madneſs*, all have without ſcruple ſub-"mitted to every form; while it anſwered in any "degree, the principal purpoſes of its inſtitution."

For a return of his compliment to theſe *excepted few*, we may remit the Doctor to the advocates of ſome eminent names, in the liſt of our Non-jurors of the laſt generation; who probably in their reply, even to the bare matter of fact, might come to ruin the merits of this curious caſe.

But that is none of my buſineſs. I will ſuppoſe the caſe to be fairly ſtated, and conſider only the *ſimilarity* of it, to that which it is brought to illuſtrate.

The *ſingle* and *ſole* purpoſe of inſtituting civil government, is to provide for the *temporal* ſecurity and happineſs of mankind; and while civil government anſwers *this principal* purpoſe of its inſtitution in any degree, it is leſs material what the forms of it are; for the purpoſe may be anſwered under very different forms. And the reaſon why ſubmiſſion to any, or all theſe forms in their turn, offends no man's conſcience, is becauſe *revelation* is ſuppoſed to be ſilent about them, and to leave men to adjuſt the forms of civil government to their own particular circumſtances, which by reaſon of an endleſs variety in the ſituation, produce, climate, &c. of different countries, and in the genius, temperature, and complexion of their inhabitants thence ariſing, muſt always infinitely vary.

But has the inſtitution of divine worſhip, public or private, no purpoſe beyond the temporal happineſs of a people? Has not revelation aſſigned ſufficient reaſons, why the ſupreme Governor of the world ſhould more immediately interpoſe his authority in *one* of theſe *inſtitutions*, than in the *other*?

The Defender ſeems to make ſome difficulty of admitting this, for he ſays—"Let it not be pre-"tended that the affairs of civil life are more indif-"ferent, or more ſubject to human prudence, than "the affairs of religion."

But why not *pretend* it? The Saviour of the world not only *pretended* it, but *proved* it. No matter for that, the Doctor has reaſons of his own, and here they are.

"The virtue, and knowledge, and happineſs of "a people, certainly depend as much on the form "of their government, and the nature of their "laws, as on the ceremonies of their public wor-"ſhip."

Very likely, unleſs thoſe ceremonies are of a more uſeful and edifying ſort, than ſuch things too commonly are. But all this while we advance not one ſtep, towards the *ſimilarity* of the two caſes. For the virtue, knowledge, &c. here meant, are but *external* virtue, *human* ſcience, and *temporal* happineſs. If the Doctor means any thing *more*, he muſt give us leave to make the neceſſary additions to his propoſition, after which the merit of it will immediately appear.

"The *internal* as well as the *external* virtue, the "knowledge of things *divine* as well as of things "*human*, the *future* as well as the *preſent* happineſs "of a people depend as much on the form of their "civil government, and the nature of their civil "laws, as on—what? Not, *the ceremonies of their* "*public worſhip*, but *the affairs of religion*;" for theſe were the *affairs* in queſtion in his premiſſes, though

though he has found the means to ſhuffle a few meagre ceremonies into their place in his concluſion.

Now as no Chriſtian Divine can be ſuppoſed to avow the doctrine above-ſtated, I preſume the Doctor will tell us, that the ceremonies of public worſhip were all the affairs of religion he was here conſidering; that he had nothing, for the preſent, to do with any other religious affairs at all; and that we had no buſineſs to put any terms into his concluſion, which he had ſeen fit to leave behind him in his premiſſes.

Well then, ſuppoſing the Creator to have revealed to mankind, inſtructions ſufficiently clear and explicit to direct them in *all* affairs of religion; may the ceremonies of public worſhip be detached from *other* affairs of religion? Are theſe ceremonies more indifferent, or more ſubject to human prudence than *other* affairs of religion? Equally indifferent, and equally ſubject to human prudence, as the forms of civil government? This the Doctor muſt mean, if he would hope to bring the two caſes any thing near to a parallel.

And this indeed, it is very plain he *does* mean, by his making the *rightfulneſs* of religious ceremonies to depend intirely on the authority of *cuſtom*. But then, upon this footing, the diſcerning reader will immediately perceive that the caſes are not *ſimilar*, but exactly the *ſame*; and that the Doctor can reap no ſort of benefit to his cauſe, by putting them into a compariſon.

As therefore the Doctor and his adverſaries the Diſſenters, have ſo very different notions of the *nature* and *lawfulneſs* of religious ceremonies, he muſt ſtrangely deceive himſelf if he ſhould hope, they will "let the deciſion in both caſes proceed upon "the ſame principles." Since if they ſhould conform to liturgies upon the *ſame* principles that induce

duce them to ſubmit to the forms of civil government; they might perhaps be obliged to acquieſce in a Liturgy, which was barely uſeful for *temporal* purpoſes, without one ſpark of piety or perfection in it of any other ſort.

But while the good Doctor is thus employed in finding wickets for the admiſſion of his adverſaries, "he would not be underſtood to intimate that of "all the difficulties which they have heaped toge-"ther, any part remains unremoved; his view is "only to convince them, that the removal was "more than they could reaſonably demand."

Difficulties are greater or leſs, according to the ſtrength required to overcome them. Some *ſtrain at gnats*, others can *ſwallow camels*. Difficulties may be removed with reſpect to ſome perſons, which to others remain inſuperable. To ſuppoſe the difficulties under conſideration to have been removed with reſpect to the Diſſenters, is begging the queſtion. And the Defender's arguments which go upon that ſuppoſition, amount to no more than an account of *his own* ſtrength and digeſtion.

Whoever undertakes to remove difficulties, or to leſſen thoſe which remain unremoved, ſhould, for the ſake both of his own credit, and the ſucceſs of his undertaking, be well acquainted with the abilities and diſpoſitions of thoſe he is to conduct through them, as well as the nature of the difficulties themſelves.

In the preſent caſe, the principal difficulty on the part of the Diſſenters, ariſes from that ſaying of our Lord which imports, that they *who teach for doctrines the commandments of men, worſhip God in vain*; or as it is in *Iſaiah*, *who teach the fear of God by the precept* of men. And they argue, that if the Liturgy of our Church contains any of theſe *doctrines*, *commandments* or *precepts*, it muſt be ſo far a *vain* or a *falſe* rule of worſhip.

Now

Now there are but two poſſible methods of removing this difficulty, either, 1. by ſhewing that the Liturgy contains no ſuch commandments or precepts; or 2. by purging them out of the Liturgy. Dr. *Powell* pleads for conformity to the Liturgy in its preſent form. Has he then, proved that it ſtands clear of this difficulty? No, he has all along ſuppoſed the contrary. With what face then can he affirm, either that "no part of all the difficul-"ties heaped together by our adverſaries remain "unremoved, or that the removal of them is more "than they can reaſonably demand?"

But why ſhould this demand be ſo *unreaſonable?* "Becauſe, ſays the Doctor, it is not a condition of "union in our Church, that even its miniſters "ſhould acknowledge every thing in the public "ſervice, to be exactly what is *beſt* and *fitteſt*."

Once more the queſtion is not concerning what is abſolutely *beſt* and *fitteſt*, but concerning what is *good* and *fit*, according to a particular rule, in the competency and authority of which both ſides are agreed. Will the Doctor ſay, that the miniſters of the Church do not acknowledge, that every thing in our public ſervice is *good* and *fit*, according to this rule? No, he will not ſay ſo much *poſitively*, and *plainly*; he only inſinuates it, by way of cajoling theſe malecontents into a little good humour; though unhappily the artifice is too flimſy even for preſent uſe; for thus ſtands the caſe.

"You ſubſcribe or aſſent to the *uſe* not the *truth* "of the Liturgy." Very well, ſays the candidate, that is ſome comfort. It implies no more than an *aſſent* to follow *in my practice* the preſcribed forms of prayer; and I am ſtill at liberty to think what I will, of the rectitude of the ſervice. "Not ſo, ſays "the Defender, for at your entrance into the mi-"niſtry, you are to profeſs in the ſtrongeſt manner, "that in your mind you aſſent to theſe forms."

Aſſent

Aſſent *in my mind!* ſays the man, pray wherein does this differ from aſſenting to the *truth* of the Liturgy?—Here the ſophiſtry is all ſpun off; the ſcrupulous ſubſcriber is left to ſettle matters with his conſcience as he can; and the pompous caſuiſt after all his grimace, appears to underſtand this declaration, (if he underſtands it at all) juſt as it is underſtood by every man whom it drives from our communion.

We are now to enter upon a new ſcene; "the "caſe of our *other* ſubſcription, which according "to our Defender, is to be underſtood in a diffe-"rent manner."

"Our articles of religion, ſays he, are not merely "articles of peace. They are deſigned alſo as a "teſt of our opinions."

They are then both articles of peace, and a teſt of our opinions. *Peace* when ſpoken of in reference to *opinions*, implies *agreement* and *conſent* in the *ſame* opinions. And then the definition of our articles will ſtand thus. "The xxxix articles are a teſt by which it is proved, that *all* the ſubſcribers to them are of the ſame opinions with reſpect to the ſeveral doctrines contained in the ſaid articles." This likewiſe is perfectly agreeable to the account which the articles give of themſelves, viz. *Articles agreed upon by the Archbiſhops, and Biſhops of both provinces, &c. for the avoiding of diverſities of opinion, and ſtabliſhing conſent touching true religion.* Whence it appears that the ſubſcribers to theſe articles, are underſtood by the Church, not only to *believe* them, every one for himſelf; but *all* to believe them in *one uniform* ſenſe.

The ſame is likewiſe implied in Dr. Powell's deſcription of them. If two or more men ſubſcribe an article each in a different ſenſe, that article immediately ceaſes to be an article of *peace*; and diverſities of opinion are not thus avoided, but rather pro-

promoted; or at leaſt made more public than they would otherwiſe have been. For it is very poſſible that many of theſe ſubſcribers, would have had no other opportunity or temptation to have ſignified ſome of their opinions, but this of ſubſcribing. On the other hand, if one or more men ſubſcribe theſe articles, as articles of peace, without any reſpect to their opinions; or as ſome have explained this, as engaging not to contradict them, they ceaſe to be *a teſt of opinions*. Conſent touching true religion, is not eſtabliſhed by ſuch ſubſcription.

Thus hath the Defender ſhut the door upon all latitude, even before he hath brought it into view, unleſs *peace* and *diſſenſion*, *identity* and *diverſity* are preciſely the ſame things, and that there may be a ſort of teſts by which nothing can be proved. How he attempts to recover his ground, we ſhall ſee in its place.

In the mean time, as the Defender, in this paragraph, offers the only ſhadow of an argument in defence of the Church for *requiring* ſubſcriptions, that is to be found in the whole Sermon, (the reſt of it being indeed little elſe but an apology for ſubſcribers,) it is quite neceſſary to beſtow ſome previous conſideration upon that.

"It is not, ſays he, more unreaſonable to exclude "a man from this office, [of a teacher of religion] "who through error, unavoidable, ſuppoſe, and "innocent error, is unfit to execute it; than to "deny him a civil employment, for which he is "accidentally diſqualified."

The tokens of diſqualification for a civil employment are viſible and notorious, or at leaſt may become ſo by ſuch evidence as will prove the diſqualification to the higheſt degree of certainty. Some circumſtances of diſqualification for the miniſtry, may likewiſe be thus diſcovered and proved, ſuch as *ignorance* and *immorality*. And ſo far, parity of rea-

ſon will bear the Church of *England* out, in rejecting inſufficient and improper candidates. But what method has this Church of aſcertaining the *truth* or error of any man's opinions, ſo as *reaſonably* to pronounce him fit or unfit, on that *ſole* account, to execute the office of a teacher?

The Chuch of England claims to be a proteſtant Church. In all proteſtant churches the rule of faith is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament; and whoever conforms his faith and opinions to that rule, is, or ought to be, upon proteſtant principles, acquitted of *error*.

The only equitable trial of a candidate for the miniſtry, in theſe circumſtances, is, to examine whether he has a competent knowledge of the ſeveral languages in which the Scriptures were originally written; a juſt notion of the importance of thoſe principal paſſages, in the ſenſe of which all mankind are generally agreed; and in which it is chiefly neceſſary the people ſhould be inſtructed. And if to the proof of his abilities in theſe particulars he is willing to add a ſolemn declaration, either by word or writing, that he believes the Scriptures to be the word of God, and that he will inſtruct the people committed to his care out of thoſe Scriptures only, to the beſt of his judgment and underſtanding, no poſſible objection can be framed upon proteſtant principles, againſt his admiſſion into the miniſtry, ſo far as ſuch objections relate to *error*.

But it is poſſible, you will ſay, for men very well qualified in *theſe* reſpects, to ground falſe and erroneous opinions upon paſſages of Scripture; and for a number of ſuch men to differ concerning the ſenſe of the ſame paſſages. Theſe things may occaſion great evils and inconconveniencies in religious ſocieties, whoſe credit and influence, in a great meaſure, depend upon a concurrence in the ſame ſyſtem of doctrines. And it would be very hard upon the Church,

Church, if you would not allow her to provide a remedy for ſuch an evil, ſince you allow it without reluctance to other ſocieties.

Now whoever it is that makes *this* defence for ſubſcriptions, it ſhould not be Dr. P. The very ſame evils and inconveniencies muſt unavoidably attend that *latitude* which he allows in ſubſcribers, that are here ſuppoſed to attend a free and unreſtrained ſtudy of the Scriptures. Of *two* inconſiſtent opinions *one* muſt be erroneous. Conſequently, ſo far as the *prevention of error*, makes it reaſonable for the Church to impoſe ſubſcription to the xxxix articles, the Doctor's ſubſequent ſcheme of *latitude*, renders the Church utterly indefenſible.

Indeed, if the Doctor's ſcheme of latitude is wholly groundleſs and imaginary, (and ſuch it will probably be found upon examination) then the apology, made above, for ſubſcriptions, is the only one imaginable, and as ſuch, deſerves a direct and explicit anſwer, whether it comes from Dr. *Powell*, or any one elſe.

The queſtion then is, not whether the Church is reaſonably intituled to the uſe of ſuch a remedy, or ſuch an antidote againſt error, but whether, in her preſent circumſtances, ſhe can find or procure ſuch a remedy; and particularly whether ſubſcription to our preſent ſet of articles is the remedy required?

Let us then ſuppoſe in the firſt place, that theſe articles are exactly and perfectly agreeable to the word of God; and that all ſubſcribers agree in putting one uniform ſenſe upon them. Will ſubſcription to them prevent the riſe and growth of *error* in the Church? By no means. Men may differ, and may err in an hundred points on which the articles are wholly ſilent; many of which may be of as pernicious conſequence to the faith and manners of the people, as any of the errors ſuppoſed to be excluded by ſubſcription. And I do not deſire to

confine this obſervation to *our* articles, but am willing it ſhould be extended to the moſt voluminous proteſtant *confeſſion* of faith, to be found in any collection now extant.

In the next place, if it ſhould be a doubtful caſe, whether theſe articles are agreeable to the word of God or not, whither ſhall we go to have it determined? A candidate for the miniſtry thinks ſome of theſe articles are erroneous, and refuſes to ſubſcribe them. The church, upon ſuch refuſal, excludes him from the miniſtry, and ſays the error is with *him*. Who ſhall judge between them? The candidate, as a Proteſtant, is undeniably intituled to his right of private judgment. And in this the Church cannot over-rule him, without renouncing her own proteſtant principles, and aſſerting to herſelf that very infallibility, which ſhe denies to the church of *Rome*. And without this infallibility, where the error lies, whether in the article or the candidate, muſt remain an impenetrable ſecret.

Our warmeſt and moſt orthodox divines have been made ſo ſenſible of this dilemma upon the Church, that the moſt bigotted among them have given up ſubſcription as a teſt of *truth* and *error*; and have twiſted themſelves and the articles, into a thouſand different attitudes, in order to find, if poſſible, ſome other *reaſonable* argument for impoſing it.

For example. "When we ſpeak of a *right*, ſays "the very orthodox Dr. *Stebbing*, to determine "what is the true ſenſe of any article of faith, we "do not propoſe the explication given in virtue of "this right, as a rule for the faith or conduct of "Chriſtians, but only as a rule, according to which "they ſhall either be admitted or nor admitted to "officiate as public miniſters *."

* Rational Enquiry into the proper methods of ſupporting Chriſtianity. *Page* 36.

This

This looks as if the Church had a right of *determining*, &c. for her miniſters, but *no* right to determine for *other* Chriſtians. For ſurely what the Church has a right to *determine*, ſhe muſt have a right to *propoſe as a rule*. Or might the Doctor mean, that they who were to be admitted to officiate in the Church as public miniſters, were not, on thoſe occaſions, conſidered by the Church as Chriſtians? But to make ſenſe of his own poſitions, *was* Dr. *Stebbing*'s buſineſs, and *is not* mine. What I cite him for is only to ſhew, that even this zealous advocate for ſubſcription, durſt not venture to *propoſe* the articles, as a teſt of *truth* and *error*.

It would be entertaining enough to tranſcribe a few more of theſe *reaſonable* accounts of ſubſcription, ſince this notion of a teſt of truth and error was given up; wherein the diſtreſſed caſuiſts are for ever giving with one hand, what they find themſelves obliged to draw back with the other. And in this fluctuating ſtate things remained, no man knowing what he had to depend upon, till a great Genius aroſe, before whom no difficulties could ſtand their ground for a ſingle moment; and from him we learn, that "the clew to lead us ſafe "through all the intricacies and perplexities in "which the controverſy [concerning religious teſts] "has been involved, is that the true end for which "religion is *eſtabliſhed* is, not to provide for the "*true faith*, but for CIVIL UTILITY †."

This I preſume, is quite ſatisfactory. No man after this can pretend to entertain any ſcruples about ſubſcription, or any other terms of conformity. For it ſeems that a Diſſenter from theſe terms, who may think his quiet diſſent ſufficiently juſtified before God and man by ſomething he finds in the Goſpel of Chriſt, is all the while incurring the

† The *Alliance* between Church and State. *Lond.* 1748. Page 254.

guilt

guilt of an offender againſt the *civil utility* of his country. Be it remarked however, by the way, that ſome people have drawn but an aukward conſequence from this doctrine, namely, that if this is really the caſe, *Jeſus Chriſt*, very probably never intended that *his* religion ſhould be *eſtabliſhed* at all.

It would not be eaſy to find out what it was that led our Defender, ſo much as to a hint of *this* uſe of ſubſcription, which ſo many of his brethren, equally *willing*, and equally *zealous*, had found themſelves obliged to deſert and explode. If he thought himſelf able to juſtify the Church in eſtabliſhing a teſt of *truth* and *error*, diſtinct from that in the Scriptures, he ſhould have proceeded farther than a bare hint. But this again could not be done, without penning up the latitude he had deviſed for the ſcrupulous ſubſcriber, within ſo narrow limits, as would have made it of no ſort of ſignificance. All that can be ſaid for him is, that he was determined, neither the Church nor the Subſcriber ſhould want the benefit of any plea that could poſſibly be offered, either for the one or the other; however inconſiſtent theſe pleas might appear to be when they came to be conſidered together: in which indeed, to do him juſtice, he is not alone.

We conclude then that the Church is not *defended* in this Sermon for *requiring* ſubſcription to our articles, by any thing advanced by the preacher of it; and it now remains that we conſider how the ſubſcriber is to be *defended* in *complying* with what, for any thing the Doctor has made appear, cannot reaſonably be *required*.

" He therefore, ſays he, who aſſents to our ar-
" ticles, muſt have examined them, and be con-
" vinced of their truth."

As this is a general inference drawn from premiſſes where the *nature*, *uſe*, and *reaſonableneſs* of ſub-

ſubſcriptions are ſtated, one would imagine that it ſhould extend to all ſubſcribers whatever. And yet it appears by the ſequel, that the Doctor had no ſuch intention, and that there are caſes for which he himſelf hath provided a diſpenſation from what he here ſays *muſt* be done.

It is well known that ſubſcription to the xxxix articles is required of thoſe who are in no degree able or qualified to examine whether they are true or falſe: "of thoſe, for example, who are engaged "chiefly in other purſuits than the ſtudy of religi- "ous knowledge in every branch; and of thoſe "who are juſt beginning to exerciſe their reaſon."

To this it is anſwered, "That the aſſent of theſe "may be differently underſtood.—They may ac- "knowledge themſelves members of the Church "of *England*; and declare that they have no objec- "tion to her articles, but a general belief of them "grounded on the authority of others. And the "Defender ſuppoſes, that no man *conceives* any "thing farther to be meant by their ſubſcriptions."

Then I will venture to ſay, that no man *conceives* theſe ſubſcribers to give any aſſent to the articles at all, upon the Doctor's principles. For if *examination* and *conviction* be neceſſary to that aſſent which is given to the articles, how can they be ſaid to aſſent to them, or to be convinced of their truth, who have had no opportunity or no capacity to examine into it? The Doctor hath then evidently rooted up his own foundations; and this maxim which ſtands at the head of his argumentation with ſo much ſolemnity, muſt paſs for nothing but ſo many idle *unmeaning* words. But we ſhall meet with this particular caſe again. Let us now go on with the *Defence*.

Which informs us that "the truth of the arti- "cles perhaps might have been obſcured with "fewer

" fewer doubts and difficulties, had men attended to " the proper method of interpreting them."

Whence we learn, that theſe articles which have hitherto paſſed for interpretations of Scripture, do now want to be interpreted themſelves. The ſtrongeſt reaſon that can poſſibly be invented for the utter abolition of them. It is for the honour of our Reformers to ſuppoſe, that they intended by theſe explanations, to give the ſenſe of Scripture in the plaineſt and cleareſt manner they could. Time, and the mutability of language have rendered theſe interpretations *equally*, perhaps *more* doubtful and difficult to underſtand, than the very Scriptures they were intended to explain. Do not reaſon and common ſenſe direct us, in this caſe, to *newer* and *more intelligible* explanations of Scripture, and to lay aſide theſe old and obſolete ones as of no farther uſe.

" It cannot appear ſtrange, ſays the Doctor, that " there ſhould be rules of interpretation peculiar " to theſe writings, when the deſign of interpreting " them is peculiar."

Very true; the *ſtrange* part of the ſtory is, that theſe writings which are ſo *doubtful* and *difficult*, ſhould ſtill be retained in a proteſtant Church, as a teſt of the orthodoxy of its members; or indeed, that any authentic interpretations of any thing, ſhould ſtand in need of farther interpretations. But theſe writings being retained in the Church in the nature of a teſt, and the *deſign* of the interpreters being to conform their diſcrepant opinions to theſe writings as well as they can, for many valuable conſiderations them thereunto moving, it is *not* at all *ſtrange* that they ſhould contrive rules of interpretation adapted to ſo *peculiar* a caſe.

" We are not concerned *here*, ſays the Doctor, " to diſcover what was meant by the writers."

A very *peculiar* rule of interpretation indeed, to ſit down to interpret writings, without being concerned to diſcover the meaning of them! For what is the meaning of any writings but the meaning of the writers? Muſt not a man preſume too much upon a *willing* audience who ventures to retail ſuch contradictions to the common ſenſe of all mankind, before ſo learned and ſolemn an aſſembly?

But after all, whoſe *deſign*, and what *deſign* does he mean? It appears by what this very Defender ſubjoins to this jargon, that neither the Governors of the Church, nor the legiſlature have *any* deſign that the articles ſhould be interpreted at all. "The "former he tells us have no authority to diſpenſe "with or alter"---ſomething or other, which muſt be *the meaning of the articles*, to ſave this part of his period from the peril of nonſenſe. "And the "ſenſe of the legiſlature, that is to ſay, the mean-"ing they put upon the articles he ſays *we* ſhall "never be able to determine." Which may be true, if we "are not concerned to diſcover what "was meant by the writers of the articles;" and all for a very plain reaſon.

Both the Legiſlators and the Governors of the Church very well know, that the articles themſelves are interpretations of Scripture, and that to lay down rules for interpreting theſe interpretations, would have much the ſame wiſdom in it, as to lay down rules for building a new houſe upon an old one. They have therefore, (thus far at leaſt) ſenſibly and conſiſtently, only injoined that the ſubſcriber ſhould declare, that theſe interpretations are agreeable to the Scriptures; or in other words, that they are true interpretations of Scripture. If our Legiſlators or the Governors of our Church, had any deſign to have theſe articles farther interpreted; or indeed, if they had any conception that they ſtood in need of it, it is reaſonable to preſume they

themſelves would have laid down the rules of interpretation, or have delegated their power to ſome particular body of interpreters, in whoſe judgment and integrity they could confide. As they have done none of all this, we are very ſure they ſtill adhere to the *original* ſenſe of the compilers, and conſequently confine every ſubſcriber to that ſenſe, by taking every ſubſcription to the articles in one common form of words, which plainly implies it.

But if we are not concerned to diſcover the original ſenſe of the writers, what are we concerned to diſcover? The Defender replies, "what will be "underſtood by the readers;" not the *individual* readers, who are more immediately required to ſubſcribe, but readers *in general.* "For, continues the "Doctor, every ſincere man who makes a public "declaration, will conſider it as meaning what it "is *uſually* conceived to mean."

Whence it follows, that he who diſſents from the general voice of learned men—who ſubſcribes in a ſenſe, neither the moſt obvious, nor the moſt uſual---who adds to the common ſtock of interpretations---and who differs from former interpreters, is *not* a ſincere man. Yet the Doctor has given ſubſcribers as much liberty in theſe inſtances as their hearts can wiſh. He could not mean to *give* men liberty to be *inſincere.* No, he only *takes* the liberty to be inconſiſtent with himſelf.

But there ſeems to me to be a more material objection to the Defender's doctrine of ſincerity. When applied to the caſe under our conſideration; it ſtands thus.

"Every ſincere man, when he makes a public "and ſolemn declaration of *his own* faith, will conſider *that* declaration as meaning, not what it "*really does mean*, not what he himſelf may *apprehend it to mean*, not what they who *require* ſuch "declaration *have determined* it to mean; but what "it is *uſually* conceived to mean by others, who

"do

" who do not think themſelves concerned to diſ-
" cover what the *true* meaning of it may be."

What company does the defender keep? His *thinking* men are guided by *faſhion*; his *ſincere* men make public and ſolemn declarations of *their own* faith in *other men's* meanings; and, as we ſhall ſee preſently, his *honeſt* men may agree without ſcruple, in the *ſame* confeſſion of their faith, although they make this confeſſion, in inconſiſtent ſenſes.

Well then, there is it ſeems, an *uſual* meaning of the articles (a meaning however unknown to, or at leaſt unnoticed by the governors of the Church, or the Legiſlature) and where is this meaning to be met with?--- " In the general voice of learned men
" through the nation," ſays the Doctor.

But who are theſe learned men? Or where is their general voice regiſtred? Here the Defender is juſt as much at a loſs as the reſt of us, as appears by his propoſing the following queries.

" If our articles are thus to be explained, will
" they not be rendered uncertain and uſeleſs by a
" variety of inconſiſtent ſenſes? Where ſhall we
" fix the ſtandard of public opinion? Will not
" every whimſical interpreter find ſome followers,
" whom he may call the learned of the nation; and
" give the colour of public authority to his own in-
" ventions?"

The Doctor we own has hit our ſcruples to a hair. Theſe are preciſely the queſtions we deſire to have anſwered; and we hope he is more of a ſportſman than to ſtart game which he will not fairly run down.

Firſt then, " will not our articles, thus explain-
" ed, be rendered uncertain and uſeleſs by a va-
" riety of inconſiſtent ſenſes?"

" Without doubt, ſays the Doctor, the method
" propoſed admits *ſome* variety of interpretations.
" And what other does not?"

We have pointed out to him *one* other which does not; the method of the church and the legiſlature. But the queſtion is now concerning this *new* method of his own; and by ſo much of his anſwer as we have already recited, it appears that the ſtandard of public opinion is not to be fixed. But this is not all we want to know. We deſire him to be explicit, and to tell us plainly, will the method he propoſes or will it not, "admit of "a variety of inconſiſtent ſenſes?"

Here he heſitates again, and gravely tells us, "the larger its compaſs is, the more honeſt men "will it comprehend."

Aye, and the more knaves too, unleſs the Doctor's *knaves* have more ſcruples and nicer conſciences than his *honeſt men*; which indeed I have ſome ſuſpicion may partly be the caſe. But this is ſtill keeping aloof from the point. Once more, will not this new method make room for inconſiſtent ſenſes?

Why ſays the Doctor at laſt, "perhaps there is "no danger, even in times of the greateſt freedom "and candor that it ſhould become too wide."

If ſo, it muſt at all *ſuch* times be wide enough to admit of inconſiſtent ſenſes, or as he explains himſelf in the next paragraph, of oppoſite principles. And thus the articles are fairly given up as uncertain, and uſeleſs at leaſt, if not ſomething worſe.

"What the limits of this variety *ought to be*, is "it ſeems, no part of the Doctor's inquiry."

What, not as a Defender of ſubſcriptions? He has made the articles a *teſt* of opinions; he has pin'd down the ſincerity of the ſubſcriber to the *uſual* meaning of the articles; and he has deſcribed this uſual meaning to be the *general voice* of learned men. All which are plainly limitations on the compaſs of this variety. And is it after all no part of his buſineſs, as an advocate for the church, to inquire whether theſe limitations are juſt and proper?

per? Will not ſome of our beſt and wiſeſt friends be apt to blame us here for a little tergiverſation?

" It is ſufficient however, in the Doctor's ac-
" count, if he can determine what the limits of this
" variety are; what difference of judgments is al-
" lowed to thoſe [honeſt men] who may neverthe-
" leſs agree without ſcruples in the ſame confeſ-
" ſion of their faith."

The determination of theſe limits, is indeed the only expedient that can take away the ſcruples of honeſt men, in any affair of this nature. And yet, notwithſtanding the Doctor undertakes this determination, and makes a mien as if he were ſetting about it, before we have done with him, we ſhall find him once more throwing up his game, and freely confeſſing, that this variety has no limits that he can poſſibly diſcern. Let us however attend to his *attempts*.

" Wherever an article is expreſſed in ſuch ge-
" neral terms as will *fairly* contain ſeveral opi-
" nions; there certainly it is ſufficient for him
" who ſubſcribes, to be convinced that ſome one of
" thoſe opinions is true."

As the Doctor has here ſuppoſed, that there *are* articles expreſſed in ſuch general terms, a ſingle inſtance of ſeveral ſenſes *fairly* contained in any *one* article, would have been much to his purpoſe. Poſſibly a ſubſcriber, by the help of ſome of the Defender's expedients herein after mentioned, may be able to put a particular ſenſe *of his own* upon ſome general words of an article, and this may be ſufficient for the *preſent eaſe* of the ſubſcriber himſelf. But this, not being the real meaning of the article, is not ſufficient for the church, which has no where declared, that this ſubſcription is required barely for the ſatisfaction of the ſubſcriber.

But the Doctor attempts to prove that this likewiſe is ſufficient for the church. " For it has been

" ſaid

" ſaid, that this latitude of expreſſion was choſen " on purpoſe to admit within the pale of the " church, men of various, and even oppoſite prin- " ciples."

It has indeed been ſaid, that a latitude capable of admitting *different* ſenſes, was plainly *intended* in the wording of the articles. But who ever ſaid that this latitude of expreſſion was *choſen* on purpoſe to admit *oppoſite* ſenſes? If one opinion is true, the oppoſite to it muſt be falſe. And if the 20th article is either to be believed or underſtood, nothing could be farther from the intention of the compilers, than to make room for repugnancy of opinions.

But among all thoſe who have *ſpoken* of this latitude of expreſſion in our articles, who has *proved* that any ſuch thing was ever intended in any degree?

And here I cannot but ſtop to lament the hard fate of the Defender, that he ſhould be obliged to appeal to the *meaning* of the compilers on *this* occaſion, which he thought himſelf ſo lately not concerned to diſcover on *any*. To relieve him a little under this perplexity, we will give him ſome light into this myſtery, if it is only to induce him to look a little farther before him another time.

The firſt tidings of this latitude in our articles I have met with, are in the honeſt and facetious Dr. *Thomas Fuller*'s church-hiſtory of *Britain*, Book IX. pag. 27. whoſe words are theſe.

" In the convocation now ſitting, *(viz.* anno " $156\frac{2}{3}$) the nine and thirty articles were compoſed. " *For the main* they *agree* with thoſe ſet forth in " the reign of K. *Edward* the 6th; tho' *in ſome* " *particulars*, allowing *more liberty* to diſſenting " judgments. For inſtance, in this King's articles " it is ſaid, that it is to be believed, that *Chriſt* " *went down to hell* [*to preach to the ſpirits there*] " which laſt clauſe is left out in *theſe* articles, and " men

" men left to a latitude concerning the cauſe, time " and manner of his deſcent." *

Dr. *Fuller* is here a little inaccurate. The clauſe omitted ſays nothing of the *manner* of the deſcent: The *time* is aſcertained in the creed to be between the death and the reſurrrection of Chriſt, and to this men are ſtill obliged to ſubſcribe. So that in theſe two points they had the ſame latitude left *before* as *after* this clauſe was left out. The latitude they obtained by the diſmiſſion of this clauſe, was only with reſpect to the *cauſe* or *end* of the deſcent; a latitude or a liberty to believe any thing or nothing at all about it. Which is a very different thing from a liberty to put various ſenſes upon expreſſions that ſtill *remain* in the articles.

But to procede with Dr. *Fuller*. " Hence [i. e. " from this and other alterations of the ſame ſort] " ſome have unjuſtly taxed, the compoſers [of theſe " latter articles] for too much favour extended in " their large expreſſions, clean through the contex- " ture of theſe articles."

An idle and groundleſs taxation ſurely, with reſpect to the *whole contexture* of the articles; the greater part of which was the work of other compoſers; who, for reaſons to be given by and by, we may be ſure, never intended to leave any room

* The various ſenſes of which the word *Hell* is ſuſceptible in our 3d article, is to this hour the favourite inſtance with the commentators and expoſitors, of a latitude of expreſſion left in our articles; which looks as if ſuch inſtances were ſcarce. Bp. *Burnet* probably took the hint from *Fuller*, and the reſt from Bp. *Burnet*. But it ſhould have been conſidered, that the compoſers had no notion of the various ſenſes of the word *Hell*, as, out of all diſpute they underſtood nothing by that word but the *place of torment*. Nor indeed did *Fuller* himſelf, who lived ſo long after them, as appears by his doubt concerning a *local* deſcent, ariſing from the words, *thou ſhalt not leave my ſoul in Hell*, applied by St. *Peter* to our Saviour, *Acts* ii. 27. *See* Fuller's *Appeal of injured innocence*. Part 2d. pag. 86.

for

for various ſenſes, by the latitude of their expreſſions. And therefore if theſe *new* alterations admitted a latitude which the *unaltered* articles of K. *Edward* did *not* admit, the intention of theſe latter compoſers muſt have been, to admit *no* latitude, where they *altered nothing* in thoſe articles.

Fuller no doubt was aware of this, as appears by his ſaying that "the 39 articles agreed *for the* "*main* with K. *Edward*'s, and only allowed more "liberty *in ſome particulars*"; and if he had ſo thought fit, might have ſhewn the futility of this charge againſt the compoſers upon that bottom. But he was a good natured man, of a moſt healing and tolerating ſpirit, and exceſſively fond of this latitude, as appears by his aſſerting it with ſo much warmth, when he had occaſion to ſpeak of *Rogers*'s Expoſition. Inſtead therefore of confuting the *taxation*, he admits the fact it alleges without the leaſt ſhadow of a ſupport; and procedes to defend and account for this ſuppoſed conduct of the compoſers as follows.

"This proceded from their commendable mo-
"deration.----Theſe holy men did prudently *pre-*
"*diſcover* that differences in judgments would un-
"avoidably happen in the church, and were loath to
"unchurch any, and drive them off from eccleſia-
"ſtical communion for ſuch *petty differences*, which
"made them pen the articles in comprehenſive
"words to take in all, who differing in the branches,
"meet in the root of the ſame religion."

He repeats the ſame fancy elſewhere in theſe terms. "The compoſers, *providently foreſeeing that* "*doctrinal differences* would ariſe in ſo large a "church as *England* was, even betwixt Proteſtants "agreeing in fundamentals of religion; purpoſely "couched the articles in general terms (not that "falſehood ſhould take ſhelter under the covert "thereof.

" thereof, but) to include all ſuch Diſſenters with-
" in the comprehenſiveneſs of the expreſſions."
Book ix. p. 173.

But if this had been the view of the compoſers, they would no doubt have beſtowed their pains upon the *whole contexture* of the articles: for men might differ, and have differed in their judgments, very conſiderably, concerning ſeveral doctrinal points, which ſtand in the *preſent* articles juſt as they did in thoſe of K. *Edward*.

Perhaps it will be ſaid, that a ſufficient latitude was already afforded in thoſe paſſages of the old articles, which the compoſers in 1562 did not alter.

But here we appeal to the teſtimony of *Fuller* himſelf, who has given ſuch an account of the *firſt* compoſers, as will not leave room for the leaſt ſuſpicion, that they intended to allow any latitude at all.

He tells us that " king *Edward* would not ſuffer
" that convocation, which is even intituled the
" Parent of his articles of religion, to meddle with
" any matters of religion at all, through a juſt
" jealouſy which he had, that the major part
" thereof, under the fair rind of *proteſtant* profeſ-
" ſion, hid the rotten core of *Romiſh* ſuperſtition.
" It was therefore, ſays he, conceived ſafer for the
" King to relie on the ability and fidelity of ſome
" *ſelect confidents, cordial to the cauſe of religion*, than
" to adventure the ſame to be diſcuſſed and decided
" by a ſuſpicious convocation." *Church Hiſt.* B. vii. p. 421.

This indeed is the honeſt truth, and is ſufficient to convince any one, that the *firſt* compoſers of our Articles were far enough from *chuſing* equivocal expreſſions to accommodate the Papiſts, who were the diſſenters whom the compoſers thought themſelves chiefly concerned at that time to guard

againſt. The *doctrinal differences* mentioned by *Fuller* aroſe from the ſubject-matter of thoſe articles which are now called *Calviniſtical*, and which were levelled at the doctrines of *Free-will*, *Good works*, *Merit*, *Supererogation*, &c. eſteemed in thoſe days to be doctrines purely popiſh, when nobody dreamt of any controverſy breaking out upon theſe heads *among Proteſtants*.

And the pleaſantry of the matter is, that the compoſers of our articles ſhould, according to *Fuller*, be endowed with ſo exquiſite a gift of prophecy, as to be able to *prediſcover* thoſe particular *doctrinal differences*, which had no exiſtence when the articles were compoſed; and that the articles ſhould be as well fitted to comprehend the ſeveral ſenſes of Diſſenters in *theſe* points, twenty or thirty years afterwards, as if the compoſers had had the whole controverſy between the *Calviniſts* and *Arminians* before their eyes.

And what is more wonderful ſtill (if we believe Dr. *Powell*) the compoſers muſt have *prediſcovered* all the doctrinal differences of *our* times; ſome of which are of ſo different a complexion from thoſe of our forefathers, that few people would have imagined, without this notice from the Doctor, that any expreſſions in our articles were ever meant to comprehend, or could indeed be made by any means to extend to them.

After all, the beſt way to decide this diſpute is to have recourſe to the articles themſelves. And here it will not be denied that *ſome* of the alterations made in 1562, were intended to abate the reſtriction to which the ſubſcribers to *Edward's* articles had been confined.

But how was this abatement made? Not by expreſſing the exceptionable doctrines in *leſs poſitive*, or in *ambiguous* terms, but by wholly *removing* them.

Thus the ſeveral articles concerning *the eternity of future puniſhments*, and the *ſleep of the ſoul*, were wholly omitted; as was likewiſe a reſtrictive clauſe in each of the articles, concerning the *deſcent into hell*, and the *real preſence*. But it is eaſily diſcernible that where any thing is added, or farther explained by new expreſſions, the burden is really increaſed. And whoever will conſider the alteration in the 2d article; the addition of the intire 5th; the inſertion of the words [*and believed*] in the 7th, the omiſſion of the article intituled *of grace*, as leaving room for ſome degree of *free-will*; the firſt clauſe of the 20th; the inforcing *pædo-baptiſm* in the 27th, *as moſt agreeable to the inſtitution of Chriſt*; the aſſerting to national churches an authority to *ordain* human *rites* and *ceremonies* in the 34th, &c. ---Whoever I ſay will conſider theſe and ſome other differences between our preſent articles and thoſe of *Edward* VI. *impartially*, will find himſelf obliged to own that *latitude* and *moderation* were not the vices of the leading clergy in thoſe days; and that Dr. *Fuller*'s picture of them, is rather a likeneſs of what they ſhould have been than of what they really were.

Upon the whole, it now plainly appears that this *intended* latitude of expreſſion in our articles, (a notion which paſſes with wonderful facility from hand to hand, and is taken for granted in every converſation one hears on the ſubject of ſubſcription) is void of all foundation of truth. It turns out at length we ſee, to be nothing more ſubſtantial than the pleaſing dream of an honeſt man, and perhaps a ſcrupulous ſubſcriber, bred out of his earneſt deſire to have it ſo; but now ſhewn from the very circumſtances of the caſe and the contents of the articles themſelves, impoſſible to be true; or even if true, impoſſible to be applied to the ſort of ſcruples

which occaſion the perplexity of conſcientious ſubſcribers in theſe days *.

But it ſeems, the *ſtate* as well as the *church* gives countenance to this latitude of expreſſion; for "the "clergy have been exhorted by *royal authority*, to "ſhut up all diſputes in the general meaning of "the articles; that meaning, ſays the Defender, "which in ſome curious points of controverſy, "perſons of every denomination have ſuppoſed to "be on their ſide."

The Doctor means that Reſcript, which is commonly printed at the head of our xxxix articles, under the title of, *His Majeſty's Declaration*; the authority of which is ſo very ſlender, and ſome of its contents in ſo little agreement with ſome parts of our preſent conſtitution, that it cannot be admitted to decide any thing in the preſent queſtion. And he that ſhould undertake to ſupport its validity, or to make it conſiſtent with reaſon, the law of the land, the original deſign of the articles, or even with itſelf, would have great reaſon to wiſh he had found ſome better employment for his time.

This I ſuppoſe will ſufficiently appear, by the very ill ſucceſs ſo able a Defender as this has had in his comment upon one ſingle clauſe of it.

The declaration exhorts "to ſhut up *all* diſputes "in the general meaning of the articles;" that is, to ſhut up each diſpute in that *one* general meaning,

* *Peter Heylin* having peremptorily denied, againſt *Fuller*, that any liberty was left in our articles for diſſenting judgments, *Examen Hiſt.* page 143, it became neceſſary that *Fuller*, in his reply, ſhould ſupport ſo remarkable and intereſting a fact by the beſt authority he could come at. This authority turns out to be King *James*, who, on account of this latitude, *highly commendeth the diſcretion and moderation of the compoſers of our Articles.* King *James*, indeed, was the *firſt* that found it out; on what occaſion every one knows who is acquainted with the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of his reign.

which

which that article to which the diſpute relates, expreſſes. Now this muſt be *ſome* general meaning which cannot be ſuppoſed to be on *any ſide*. For this ſame declaration expreſsly forbids every man "to draw the article *aſide any way*," or "to put "*his own* ſenſe or comment to be the *meaning* of "the article." Whereas the Defender will have this general meaning to be "a meaning which "perſons of every denomination *may ſuppoſe* to be "*on their ſide*." That is to ſay, this general meaning may be twenty different meanings, put upon the article by ſo many different men, which is no doubt a moſt effectual method of *ſhutting up all diſputes*.

I am not at all concerned, as I hinted above, to anſwer for the good ſenſe, or the conſiſtency of this declaration. And I ſhould have thought the Defender had juſt as little to do with it as any man in the kingdom. For inſtance, the declaration threatens, that any man who ſhall affix any *new* ſenſe to an article, ſhall be very ſeverely dealt with. In defiance of which prohibition, the Defender allows every ſubſcriber to differ as much from former interpreters, as they have frequently done from each other. How lucky is it for the Doctor that he is out of the reach of the church's cenſure in that *commiſſion eccleſiaſtical*, of which the declaration makes mention? Had the Defender lived in the *Day* of this declaration, and expreſſed himſelf in the manner he has done in this Sermon, it is hardly to be doubted but *the royal authority*, notwithſtanding all its gentle and relaxative exhortations, would have *ſeen due execution upon him*, for more than one paſſage in his *defence*.

But we are now coming to ſomething of a different nature. We are told, that, "They are not "only general words which are capable of different "interpretations. Such as were originally determinate,

" minate, by length of time and change of circum-
" ſtances may become ambiguous."

But if *ambiguous*, they muſt ſtill be *general* words, and as ſuch *only*, capable of *different* interpretations. Does not the Defender himſelf here oppoſe *general* words, to words of a *determinate* meaning? When words loſe their *determinate* ſenſe, (which is always the caſe when they become *ambiguous*) they are, to all the intents and purpoſes of receiving *different* interpretations, *general* words. Does he mean, that length of time, and change of circumſtances may make words ambiguous in themſelves, ſo that *no determinate* ſenſe *can* be put upon them? The contrary is moſt evident in the works of good writers of all ages and in all languages. The meaning of a word in an ancient writing, may, if you pleaſe, by length of time, and change of circumſtances, become *obſcure* or perhaps *unknown*, for want of our knowing the *thing* of which that word is the name or the ſign. But no good writer uſes any word ſo, that it may ſignify two or more ſeveral things. And from bad writers we have no occaſion to take any rules, either of writing or interpretation.

" Cuſtom, ſays the Doctor, can take away the
" force of expreſſions, or give them a new mean-
" ing."

If the Doctor intended this as an illuſtration of his foregoing period, he is wide of his mark. When the *original* force of expreſſions is *taken away*, and a *new* meaning *given* them, the *ambiguity* of ſuch expreſſions ceaſes. And this indeed length of time, and change of circumſtances may do, with reſpect to the uſe of *ancient* words in *modern* writings. But what is all this to a ſubſcriber of our articles?

Now for the application. " Where the original
" ſenſe is one, the received another, the ſubſcriber
" is at liberty to uſe them in either. That he may
" underſtand them in their moſt obvious and pri-
" mitive

" mitive ſignification, will ſcarce be doubted. And " yet if there is any place for doubt, it can be " only here."

Before our author called it in queſtion, I believe no body ever doubted but the ſubſcriber *might* uſe the words of our articles, in their *moſt obvious* and *primitive* ſignification. But he hath not only doubted whether *this* ſenſe may be uſed, but poſitively determined that it may *not*. For if the ſubſcriber is not concerned to diſcover *this* ſenſe: and if he muſt uſe the *uſual* or the *received* ſenſe, on the pain of being accounted an *inſincere* man, the unavoidable conſequence will be, that where the *original* ſenſe is *one*, the *received another*, the ſubſcriber is not at liberty to uſe the *original* ſenſe at all.

Here he veres about again, and is, in this point, become as one of us, who never dreamt there was any place for doubting in ſo clear a caſe. All our doubt is, whether, where the *original* ſenſe is *one*, the *received another*, the ſubſcriber is at liberty to take the articles in the *latter* ſenſe at all.

For, in the firſt place, has not the Defender himſelf made it in the higheſt degree probable, that this *received*, this *uſual*, this *cuſtomary* ſenſe, is a mere chimæra? Has he not impoſed upon himſelf the taſk of finding it out and fixing it? And has he not, in this very Defence, acknowledged that, inſtead of being *one fixed determinate* ſenſe, it may be *twenty different*, and thoſe *inconſiſtent* ſenſes? By all means let us know what this *received* ſenſe is, before you impoſe it upon us an authentic ſenſe to which we *may* ſubſcribe.

No, we are it ſeems to take it for granted that ſuch a ſenſe there is, tho' no body knows how to fix it or where to find it.----But this received ſenſe we will ſuppoſe, is found out and fixed; and what then?

Why then, " that the ſubſcriber may underſtand " the

" the Articles as they are *uſually* underſtood, can-
" not be denied, unleſs we alſo deny the meaning
" of words to be *arbitrary* and *changeable*."

I am afraid the learned caſuiſt hath here impoſed upon his own penetration. In *modern* writings or converſation, men uſe ſeveral words in very different ſenſes from thoſe in which the ſame words were uſed an hundred or more years ago. If theſe words ſhould be uſed in ſuch writings or converſation in their *ancient* ſenſe, the writer or the ſpeaker would not be underſtood. But when a man ſits down to a book written an hundred or more years ago, he muſt then underſtand and interpret theſe words in their *ancient* or *primitive* ſenſe, or he will make his author ſpeak or write *no ſenſe at all.*

In this view is the meaning of words *arbitrary* and *changeable*, and in this view only. For with all this *mutability* you are far from being at liberty to underſtand theſe words in their *primitive*, or in their *received* ſenſe, as you pleaſe. In *modern* writings the *ancient* ſenſe of ſuch changeable words, is plainly *excluded.* And for the ſame reaſon, in *ancient* writings, the *received* or the *modern* ſenſe, is as evidently *interdicted.* Common ſenſe preſcribes this variety of uſage, and fixes theſe limits to this variety. If any man ſhould tell the Defender that he is at liberty to underſtand certain words in *Pope*'s writings, in the ſame ſenſe that they were uſed by *Chaucer* or *Spenſer*, becauſe *the meaning of words is arbitrary and changeable*, would he not ſay the man was mad?

He has nothing left then whereby to bring the caſe of the articles within the influence of his own reaſoning, but his *peculiar* rules of interpretation; that is, ſuch rules as are not applicable to any other writings or diſcourſes whatever. And here, if I might have adviſed him, he ſhould have kept himſelf, and made the moſt of his intrenchment. But this was by no means ſuitable to the enterprizing genius

genius of our ſpirited Champion. He boldly ventures to come out of his ſtrong hold, and is going to ſhew, that this caſe is *not* peculiar, but like twenty other caſes in civil commerce and converſation.

" That payment, ſays he, is honeſtly made, " which is reckoned according to the value the " money *now* bears, however it may have varied " ſince its firſt coinage."

The value of money is fixed by proper authority, to a *certain* and *indubitable* ſtandard. It may be *changeable*, but it is not *arbitrarily* ſo. The value of money, whether of *ancient* or *modern* coinage, is always the *ſame*, at the *ſame* period of time, to every ſingle ſubject, who is concerned either to make or to receive payments. Has the Defender ſhewn that this is the caſe with his *received* ſenſe of the articles? Does he pretend to ſhew it? What ſort of an *honeſt pay-maſter* muſt he be who endeavours to palm theſe counterfeit ſenſes upon us for true and current ſterling?

" And truth is then fairly ſpoken, when each ex- " preſſion has the full weight for which it generally " paſſes."

Aye, ſo ſays *Eſcobar*, ſo ſays *Suarez*, and the reſt of that fraternity. When a man is about to frame an equivocation, if he has the leaſt hope that it ſhould paſs upon men of common underſtanding, he will be particularly careful that " each ex- " preſſion ſhall have the full weight for which it " generally paſſes." Which may very eaſily be done, and yet the ſpeaker be underſtood by the hearer, in *a* meaning very different from *the* meaning which the ſpeaker reſerves to himſelf. But will any one (the Defender and the abovementioned Divines excepted) pretend to ſay, that " the truth is *then* " *fairly* ſpoken."----- " It is poſſible, ſays a late " moſt ingenious and entertaining writer, for a man

" to convey a lie in the words of truth." This relates to the caſe of one Mr. *Dowling* in the hiſtory of *Tom Jones*, B. XVIII. chap. 8. If the Defender will take the trouble to read that diſcourſe of the ſaid *Dowling*, to which Mr. *Fielding* applied this obſervation, he will eaſily ſee, that " each expreſ-" ſion in it has the full weight for which it gene-" rally paſſes;" and yet it ſeems the man " did " not *fairly* ſpeak the truth." This ſententious obſervation therefore, will want ſome farther elucidation, before it paſſes for a parallel caſe to that of the payment of money, which is reckoned by him that pays it, and by him who receives it, at the ſame preciſe value.

" Nor are theſe changes of ſenſe unuſual even in " our moſt ſolemn forms. The paſſages of the " Pſalms or other Scriptures, which make a part " of our daily devotions, cannot always be applied " by every Chriſtian as they were by the writers. " And yet nothing could be more contemptible " than to object to *them* on this account."

Agreed; if by *them* the Doctor means *the Scriptures* that are ſo applied in our public Service. It would indeed be moſt contemptible to object to the Scriptures themſelves, on *this* or *any ſuch* account. The proper objection lies againſt the *forms* and *devotions* where the Scriptures are ſo miſapplied, and which oblige chriſtians either to apply theſe Scriptures *improperly*, or to forbear joining in thoſe parts of our public worſhip, where theſe Scriptures occur. An objection ſo juſt, and ſo far from contemptible, that I never yet met with a Defender of our Church that could get fairly get rid of it. But what does the Doctor mean by this? May the *Scriptures* by length of time, and change of circumſtances, become *ambiguous?* Can *cuſtom* take away the force of, or give a new meaning to, the expreſſions of *Scripture?* Are there two or more different

rent ſenſes of *Scripture*, diſtinguiſhed by the characters of *original* and *received*, either of which a chriſtian is at liberty to uſe? Common charity forbids me to aſcribe ſuch doctrine to any proteſtant Divine. But then to what purpoſe is this obſervation?

By way of corollary to theſe demonſtrations, the Doctor takes occaſion to vindicate the Engliſh clergy from a certain "charge brought againſt "them, [that having departed from the meaning "of the articles, they all continue to ſubſcribe "what none believes."

This is a matter of no little importance. I have all the honour and reverence for the calling of the Engliſh clergy, that it can be reaſonable to demand. I greatly honour the perſons and characters of great numbers of them, whom I believe to be learned, pious, wiſe and worthy men, and who, I know, give very different accounts of their *inducements* to ſubſcribe. And though nothing gives me more pleaſure, than to ſee ſo reſpectable a body of men vindicated *properly* from any *falſe* accuſation brought againſt them; yet I humbly apprehend that in a charge of this nature, no ſingle man can be ſufficiently inſtructed to anſwer for the whole body. And I ſhould think the beſt way would be to leave every perſon concerned, to ſpeak for himſelf upon ſo nice a point as this.

Our Defender is for *all* or *nothing*, and boldly pronounces that "not only the accuſation is falſe "but the crime impoſſible. That cannot be the "ſenſe of any declaration, ſays he, which no one "imagines to be the ſenſe; nor can that inter-"pretation be erroneous, which all have re-"ceived."

But if *no one* imagines the ſenſe of the articles to be any other than that to which the *Engliſh* clergy ſubſcribe; and if *all* have received that interpreta-

tion which the *Engliſh* clergy put upon the articles, the *accuſation* muſt be as *impoſſible* as the *crime*. Whereas it appears by his own ſtate of the charge, that whether the clergy ſubſcribe the *true* ſenſe of the articles, is the very point at iſſue between the clergy and their accuſers. And in my ſimple apprehenſion, the Doctor might have begged the queſtion with a better grace in any part of his ſermon, than juſt here, where the integrity of his brethren muſt ſtand or fall by the merit of his defence.

Whether the accuſation be true or falſe, is not, as I ſaid before, to be determined by any *general* evidence offered on the behalf of the whole body; but muſt depend upon what every particular ſubſcriber has to ſay to it for himſelf. But moſt certainly the *crime* is far from *impoſſible*. For have none of the clergy departed from the original ſenſe of the articles? If not, the far greater part of this *peculiar defence* might have been ſpared. Is not the *original* ſenſe of *all* writings in general, the *true* ſenſe of thoſe writings? Has public authority declared, has the Defender proved, or can any man prove, that the *original* ſenſe of the articles is *not* the *true* ſenſe? And till this is proved, is not the charge in full force againſt every ſubſcriber to our articles, who hath departed from the *original* ſenſe? Or can any man be ſaid to believe that ſenſe from which he has departed?

But what then, you will ſay, is this *received* ſenſe the Doctor ſpeaks of, and which, as he tells us, is ſufficiently confirmed by the twofold title, of long and quiet poſſeſſion, and univerſal recognition? What is it? A childiſh bubble which the Doctor blows about for the diverſion of himſelf and the ſpectators, till the moment you touch it, it breaks, diſperſes, and mixes unſeen and undiſtinguiſhed, with

with the common maſs of the circumambient atmoſphere.

And let it break; the craftſman has the pipe in one hand, and the froth in the other, and can puff out more of the ſame ſort in the twinkling of an eye.

For example. " This [indiſputable title by poſ-" ſeſſion and recognition] is more than is neceſſary " to claim."

Hardly, for the vindication of the clergy, whoſe deviations from the *original* ſenſe of their articles, can be juſtified on no other poſſible foundation.

" Yes, ſaith the Defender, *doubtful* pretenſions " in *theſe* diſputes, are equivalent to the *cleareſt*."

Here we retreat once more into our fortreſs of *peculiarity*. With reſpect to the value of money, or the value of any thing elſe, but this *received* ſenſe, ſuch maxims as this, I am very ſure, are neither good law nor good divinity. *Doubtful* pretenſions in trials by a *teſt* equivalent to the *cleareſt*? 'Tis worth the while to look into the *interpretation* of this curious doctrine.

" It is ſufficient to juſtify the uſe of *any* explana-" tion, that it has been openly declared, and not " generally condemned. And therefore, when an " article has been underſtood by good and learned " interpreters, in a ſenſe, neither the moſt obvious " nor the moſt uſual; he who aſſents to it, is at " liberty to follow their guidance, or to join him-" ſelf to the multitude."

So ſaith the Doctor; but *how* this *comes to be* ſufficient to juſtify ſuch an explanation, or who it is that gives the liberty to uſe it, the Doctor ſaith not. The parties concerned in every ſubſcription to the articles are two. The party who requires the ſubſcription, and the party who ſubſcribes. The former acts under a commiſſion from thoſe who preſcribe this ſubſcription, as a teſt of opinions; and hath,

hath, conſequently, as the Doctor acknowledgeth, no authority to diſpenſe with, or alter any thing about it. Have then the preſcribers of ſubſcription *given* any ſuch liberty? No, not a word of it. The ſenſe or meaning of the articles ſtands juſt as it did, for them, at the very beginning. The reſult is, that the ſubſcriber *takes* the liberty in queſtion, upon the ſame allowance, as a *fair* tradeſman would *take* the liberty, in a payment of forty pounds nineteen ſhillings, to ſlip in one or more counters in the likeneſs of real guineas.

But let us hear him out. "When the expreſ-"ſions he muſt uſe, are ambiguous (and they are "*made* ambiguous by different explanations of "them) what he affirms is in part unknown."

Can this poſſibly be, "when each expreſſion has "the full weight for which it generally paſſes." Yes, very well if you will, extend this liberty to mental reſerves and equivocations; but not otherwiſe. For who knows not, that the *uſual* acceptation of words cuts off all *concealment* as well as all *ambiguity* in the commerce of honeſt and upright men.

But indeed the ſenſe of this paragraph is as defective as the caſuiſtry of it is deteſtable. "And ſo "far as what the ſubſcriber affirms, is unknown, it "cannot be *falſe*." Why no, worthy Doctor, nor *true* neither. How can any man form a belief that another does or does not depart from the truth, when what that other affirms is *unknown?*

The ſubſcriber indeed is no loſer by this. For the upſhot is, that this mint-maſter of ſenſes has put him into a condition, where, let him mean what he will, no man alive can blame, either his want of judgment, or his want of ſincerity.

"Another uſe, ſays the Doctor may be made of "this variety of interpretations."

One uſe of it all the world ſees. It enables a great many men to hold large and lucrative preferments,

ſerments, who, were they bound down to the *true original* ſenſe of the articles, and who, if they could not find the means of *taking* more liberty than the Law or the Church *gives* them; would not be quite ſo much at eaſe in their poſſeſſions. But that *this* Defender ſhould find *another* uſe for this variety beſides *this*, is ſurprizing enough to thoſe who conſider, that, having firſt laid it down as a principle that the articles are a teſt of the ſubſcribers opinions, he has fairly ſhewn, by contending for this variety of interpretations, that the articles are abſolutely *uſeleſs* for any *ſuch* purpoſe. The Defender's *other* uſe however is this.

" This variety may help to explain the nature " and force of that aſſent which is given to the ar- " ticles; to ſhew, that it never was conceived to " have ſo much rigour, as would exclude all im- " provements from theology."

That is to ſay, one variety may help to explain another. *The articles* are, *and* are not, *a teſt of opinions*; there is *one* variety: *and therefore you* may, *or* may *not aſſent to them, according to the circumſtances you are in*; there is *another*. We meet with a ſort of ſubſcribers preſently, who ſubſcribe in *no ſenſe* at all, but that of writing their names. Is it not reaſonable to allow theſe to give *no aſſent* at all to the articles?

What *force* every man gives to his own aſſent, is a point not to be debated by me; but that it has been conceived to have ſo much rigour, in the intention of the injoyners of ſubſcription, as to exclude all improvements in thoſe points of theology to which the articles relate, is a matter of fact, which I think no man of learning, our Defender excepted, would deny.

Not ſo *conceived* indeed by the compilers of the articles; who moſt probably *never* conceived that any improvements *could* be made in theology beyond

yond what they had made themſelves. I ſay this, not only upon the credit of the hiſtories and other writings which have tranſmitted their particular characters to us, but from the remarkable oppoſition our elder divines in all ſucceeding ages, have made to all diſcoveries in ſacred literature, which have in any degree deviated from the eſtabliſhed ſyſtem. But all men of ſenſe and diſcernment who have been inclined to favour ſuch diſcoveries, have not only *conceived* ſuch rigour in the *intended* aſſent, but have loudly *complained* of it. And this diſcernment is indeed the true father of that variety for which the Defender is pleading; a variety, begotten, not upon our *legal* mother the church, who to this hour diſclaims it as a ſpurious offſpring: but brought into being, and forced upon the church by a ſort of *violence*, to which, tho' he touches upon it with great caution and tenderneſs, even our author himſelf appears not to be an abſolute ſtranger. *

The Doctor indeed would perſuade us that there is ſtill legal room enough left for theſe improvements; and this *willingneſs* to admit them deſerves our thanks, at leaſt, in ſuch a writer as he is. But, alas! it is but a *willingneſs* after all; and tho' the Doctor gives us a ſpecious account of the fact, his impotence in ſupporting it, leaves us ſtill under the mortification of perceiving too plainly, the utter inconſiſtency between what *is*, and what only *ſhould be*.

To ſet ourſelves right therefore, and, if we can, the Doctor too, it may not be amiſs to pay a little attention to theſe improvements in theology, of which he has made this honourable mention.

Improvements in theology are of two ſorts: *artificial* and *real*. *Artificial* improvements in theology are made by building ſyſtems, partly upon paſſages of Scripture ill underſtood, partly upon

* "[W]ith whatever *violence* it was at firſt introduced," &c. *Sermon*, pag. 14.

ſome

ſome fantaſtical notions of things, which never had any exiſtence, but in the brain of ſome crazy or conceited dreamer, who thought fit to call himſelf a *Philoſopher*.

Theological improvements, *really* ſuch, conſiſt in finding out, and ſhewing the true ſenſe of thoſe Scriptures, upon which theſe ſyſtems are built; and in oppoſing to the philoſophical jargon intermixed with them, the bright and clear mirrour of the goſpel. By theſe latter improvements, nine in ten of the ſyſtems in being (if ſomething did not ſtand in the way, which is neither *truth* nor *reaſon*) would be reduced to heaps of rubbiſh.

If then you would make way for the effectual operation of theſe improvements, you muſt of neceſſity remove the ſyſtems which uſurp their places, obſtruct their free courſe, and debilitate their influence.

Inſtead of this, the Defender propoſes that as "new diſcoveries ſpring up, *new* explanations of "the *old* ſyſtem ſhould be gradually framed, and "adapted to it." A method ſo exceſſively prepoſterous, that I have choſen rather to repreſent it as a *peculiar propoſal* of the Defender's, than, as he himſelf has done, a method *actually taken* with our articles.

He is for having the articles ſtill keep the ground they occupy. And ſo in God's name let them, if upon a fair and impartial examination, they ſhall be found to be true interpretations of Scripture. But let candor itſelf judge whether his way of making room for *new* diſcoveries and improvements, does not clearly imply the contrary.

Is there then no way leſs abſurd, leſs contradictory to truth, reaſon, Scripture, &c. of admitting theſe improvements, and encouraging theſe diſcoveries, than what the Defender ſpeaks of? Probably, yes; but that is not the point. This kind of edi-

fices are not wont to fall, without involving in their ruin numberleſs emoluments from which the ſons of men derive unſpeakable comforts and conveniencies. And therefore—*all hands* to work to *prop*, and *whiten*, and *daub with untempered mortar*; that whatever in the building itſelf is infirm, awry, and out of all proportion, may appear (at leaſt to ſpectators placed at certain diſtances, and in *peculiar* attitudes) ſtrong, upright, and in perfect ſymmetry. And thus we come by thoſe "*ſome things* which every commentator adds," and probably will keep adding "to the common ſtock," to the times of remote poſterity; whom we cannot but felicitate, on the bleſſings they are likely to enjoy in explanations of explanations of explanations without end or number.

If it were poſſible for the Doctor to atone for this aukward defence (not of the Church, for ſhe is at the beſt but paſſively obedient to theſe expedients, and in her *real* character utterly diſowns them, but) of modern ſubſcribers; he would merit a little favour on account of the conceſſion with which he cloſes this paragraph, *viz.* "If every minute diffe-
"rence would oblige a man to diſſent; for the ſame
"reaſon every interpreter of our articles, and per-
"haps every thinking man, muſt have diſſented
"alſo."

No difference, I apprehend, in matters of doctrine, between the *ſcriptures*, and articles *merely human*, can be ſo minute, as not to oblige a thinking man to diſſent from the latter. And who knows but every thinking man (unleſs he is *guided by faſhion* in this as well as other Church-matters) *ſhould* have diſſented, and for this ſame reaſon? What men *have done*, and what they *ſhould have done*, may be very different things. Concerning which one might perhaps learn ſome tidings of conſequence, (not by conſulting the Defender, but) from

from thoſe thinking men, who, having examined the articles before they ſubſcribed them, would be ingenuous enough to inform us, how far they ſubſcribed them *willingly ex animo*, and from a *real* and *ſincere conviction* of their truth.

But to give all the ſcope that is poſſible to the *thinking* ſubſcriber, he is told by the caſuiſt, that "the liberty of adding new explanations to the "articles, is ſuch as cannot be preciſely marked "out."

Did I not foretel that the Defender before we had done with him, would throw up his game? A page or two ago, "he would not undertake to inquire "what the limits of this variety of interpretations "*ought to be*. It was ſufficient if he could deter-"mine what they *are*." Here he fairly confeſſes he knows as little of *one* as the *other*. An admirable advocate! who neither knows what the merits of his clients cauſe *are*, nor what they *ought to be*.

In vain does he endeavour to keep his own inefficiency in countenance, by appealing to the caſe of *many moral rules*, and *all* the rules of civil liberty.

"The liberty here mentioned, ſays he, is ſuch as "cannot be preciſely marked out, and is *therefore* "liable to abuſe."

And is *therefore* moſt evidently *not* liable to abuſe. No man can be juſtly charged with the abuſe of his liberty, till you have marked out the limits of it. If there is any ſort of liberty which has no limits, or what is the ſame thing, whoſe limits cannot be marked out, no man can be ſaid to abuſe *ſuch* liberty, let him extend it ever ſo far. And to tell the public a ſecret of the Doctor's, which he wanted to conceal under the maſk of a *received* ſenſe; from this very ſuppoſition *only* of an *unlimited liberty* in ſubſcribing, ariſes the *impoſſibility* of that crime, of which he attempts to acquit the *Engliſh* clergy.

" But many moral rules are liable to abuſe, " which are nevertheleſs both reaſonable and uſe- " ful: and ſo are all the rules of civil liberty, " which are yet of the greateſt importance to the " happineſs of mankind."

No manner of doubt of it; but it is for a *contrary* reaſon, namely, becauſe the bounds of theſe rules *may* be preciſely marked out. If the bounds of ſuch rules could not be preciſely marked out, offences againſt them could not be puniſhed, becauſe they could never be diſcovered; and what is ſtill worſe, the rules themſelves would neither be *reaſonable*, *uſeful*, nor of the *leaſt importance* to the happineſs of mankind. Which, as our author has *defended* it, ſeems to be much the caſe with ſubſcription to our articles. What poſſible temptation could draw this man out of the faſtneſſes of his *peculiarity?*

Hitherto the reader is allowed to ſuppoſe, that the ſubſcriber with all this liberty, is ſtill bound to ſubſcribe the articles in *ſome* ſenſe. But the Doctor is now going to venture an obſervation on the ſubject (and what is it, after what he has already ventured, that he may not venture beſides?) by the benefit of which, liberty is given to ſome ſorts of ſubſcribers to ſubſcribe, or aſſent to the articles, without putting any ſenſe at all upon them.

His obſervation is this. " Not only the propo- " ſitions to which we aſſent, but the aſſent itſelf, " may be differently underſtood. The circum- " ſtances of the perſons who give it create this " difference. It muſt be conceived to be given " with more ſolemnity and more exactneſs by him " who profeſſes to ſtudy every branch of religious " knowledge, than by one engaged chiefly in other " purſuits; by a man of mature judgment, than " by a youth juſt beginning to exerciſe his reaſon. " It is not neceſſary, that theſe diſtinctions ſhould " be

" be made by public authority. The common " ſenſe of mankind will introduce them."

By ſaying, " It is not neceſſary theſe diſtinctions " ſhould be made by public authority," the Defender grants, that public authority *hath not* made them; and if public authority hath *not made* them, public authority hath plainly *excluded* them. For who or what beſides hath authority to introduce them? The common ſenſe of mankind muſt be guided in this, as in all other caſes, by plain facts. If public authority has injoined ſubſcriptions in one preciſe form of words, and to one and the ſame collection of doctrines, without making or mentioning any allowances or diſtinctions, between youth and old age, minority or maturity, learning or ignorance, &c. nothing can poſſibly introduce ſuch diſtinctions, but ſomething *ſuperior* to public authority. Of this kind perhaps may be the common ſenſe of this learned man, but aſſuredly the common ſenſe of mankind ſoars to no ſuch pitch.

Young people are apt to do *ſome* raſh and fooliſh things of their own motion, and to be led into *others*, by the wicked artifices of knaves and ſeducers. The wiſdom of public authority has *thought it neceſſary*, in many of theſe caſes, to preſerve inadvertent youth from the fatal effects of its own folly and indiſcretion, by making a *legal* diſtinction between the acts of a boy of ſixteen, and thoſe of a man of ſixty, even where the acts are the very ſame. This diſtinction is made by voiding the act of the young man, and leaving that of the old one in its full obligation.

Common ſenſe ſees the reaſon of this, and approves it. But had not the diſtinction been actually made by public authority, all the common ſenſe of all mankind, could not have made it appear, that what was only *fit* and *reaſonable* to be done, was *actually* done.

Thus

Thus in the caſe of ſubſcriptions; men of ſenſe, conſidering the doctrines to be ſubſcribed as conſiſting of many various and intricate points of theology, may perhaps think it equally *fit* and *reaſonable*, that no greater obligation ſhould be laid upon minors in the one caſe, than in the other. But here public authority acts a different part. It is not barely ſilent and permiſſive, but expreſsly preſcribes the act of ſubſcribing to young and old, novices and adepts, in the ſame terms; and conſiders and requires it as a ſecurity for a particular purpoſe, of equal obligation upon all alike who give it.

The common ſenſe of mankind indeed, may poſſibly introduce *one* diſtinction between the obligations in queſtion, and that is, a diſtinction made by that *authority* which is *ſuperior* to the higheſt upon earth. *That* authority will doubtleſs diſtinguiſh properly, between the ſubſcription of a child, who is incapable of acting otherwiſe in ſuch a caſe, than by *direction* or *compulſion*, and the ſubſcription of a man, who is capable of making an *accurate judgement* upon the nature, conditions and force of his own *deliberate* act. Whether ſuch diſtinctions, ſo introduced, will in the end, be very honourable to the cauſe he is conſidering, is humbly recommended to the ſerious conſideration of the Defender himſelf.

As to the teaching children *ſuch* creeds, or requiring thoſe who are *a little farther advanced in life* to aſſent, in any degree, to *ſuch* articles of man's device, "ſome parts of which they will not under-"ſtand till after many years, ſome perhaps never," the wiſdom and propriety of *both* are ſo much of a piece, that I moſt willingly leave it thoſe who are fond of the practice, to determine which of the two deſerves the preference.

And here ends this moſt remarkable *Defence of the ſubſcriptions required in the church of England.* A

Defence conducted on ſuch principles as manifeſtly tend to confound the common uſe of language, ſubvert the foundations of good faith in civil commerce, and to reduce the word of God to an ignominious level with the futile and unſtable ſyſtems of weak and preſumptuous men.

How it may fare with this proteſtant church of ours, ſhould ſhe ever adopt the Doctor's plan of ſubſcription (which heaven forbid) is perhaps of *ſome* conſequence to the public in an eccleſiaſtical view.

But it is of much *more*, that his *peculiar* rules of interpretation ſhould be utterly expelled from every branch of civil intercourſe between man and man. "For (to borrow the words of a venerable and much injured prelate in a late affecting and intereſting appeal to the public.) "Let *truth* and "*falſehood*, *integrity* and *knavery*, *ſimplicity* and "*fraud*, be decreed to be the ſame things; or "(which is all one) to have the ſame marks ſo "ſtrong upon them, that they cannot be at all diſtinguiſhed from one another; and when this is "the caſe, LET CIVIL SOCIETY SUBSIST IF IT "CAN."

THE END.

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